

Emergent speech genres  
of teaching and learning interaction.  
Communities of practice  
in Cameroonian schools and villages

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—Bjørghild Kjelsvik

Note: This dissertation is written in Latex, and though that document preparation system have many advantages, it was not kind to my transcriptions. I would ask my readers kindly to bear over with useless white spaces and some odd page layout here and there in the analyses chapters.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

“After all, language enters life through concrete utterances (which manifest language) and life enters language through concrete utterances as well.”

— Bakhtin (1986, 63)

“Most fundamentally, Cognitive Grammar makes contact with discourse through the basic claim that all linguistic units are abstracted from usage events, i.e., actual instances of language use.”

— Langacker (2001, 144)

“In a theory of practice, cognition and communication in, and with, the social world are situated in the historical development of ongoing activity.”

— Lave & Wenger (1991, 51)

These three citations all put forward an idea of the preeminence of communication and language use as part of the life of real people. Whether one talks about life and language coming together in ‘concrete utterances’ or about contact with discourse through ‘actual instances of language use’, or if one prefers ‘cognition and communication situated in historical development,’ there is a common resonance to be found. That such a resonance exists is all the more surprising since the citations come from three quite different scientific traditions: literary criticism, cognitive linguistics and community of practice theory. That resonance demonstrates a concern with language as used in actual interaction between social actors in all these three research traditions.

## 1.1 The object of study and key terms

Taking my point of departure in this common resonance, I address in the present study the important relationship between interaction, language and cognition. More specifically, I shall analyse teaching and learning interaction through a detailed analysis of language use in two different, but related contexts in Cameroon. Both contexts concern teaching and learning as found in a village setting and in a school setting in the Galim-Tignère area of Adamaoua.

The language use in learning in the everyday village setting is described through the observation of different learning environments: children learn life skills through daily activities, they gain linguistic and cultural competence through playing games and listening to tales, and they learn from more focused teaching activities.

The language use in learning in school is described through the close observation of practice and language use in class interaction. In this learning environment, children practice ‘doing school’ both by watching what other students do and by the teacher’s directions.

The two most important frameworks used to analyse the data are the paradigm of cognitive linguistics and the community of practice theory. These are brought together by a new application of the notion of speech genres, found in the work of Bakhtin (1986).

In this way, important and complex issues of language, interaction and the cognitive apparatus connected with them are addressed.

### 1.1.1 View of language

The citation from Langacker on p. 1 represents a view of language that has very important ramifications for the study of interaction in the present study. The general principles of cognitive linguistics are presented in Chapter 2, but here I will give a more indepth discussion of the assumptions about language that cognitive linguistics and hence this study builds on.

Importantly, in this view language is both linguistic utterances and linguistic structures. The two are equally important to define language, but the two categories have different ontological statuses. On the one hand, linguistic utterances are taken to be ‘units of language production (whether spoken or written) that are inherently contextualized’ (Schiffrin 1994, 41). As such they have an empirical existence in the world: put simply they can be heard, if spoken; seen, if signed or written; they ‘take place’ as it were, at specific times and locations.

Linguistic structures, on the other hand, are regularities in the form and content of the utterances. They can be described in grammars and dictionaries which specify the rules the speakers of the language seem to adhere to, but



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these rule descriptions are not necessarily existent in their own right outside linguistic utterances. Rather they emerge from the total mass of utterances as strong tendencies of shape and meaning, shared by many speakers (Hopper 1998).

We can see this in the fact that linguistic structures are always slowly changing. Change is possible because the structures *emerge* from the utterances actually used rather than exist in their own right as some sort of eternal laws (or genetic code, as the matter usually is expressed). As there always will be a certain amount of variation on all levels in utterances, the structures will change over time, as the frequency of certain variants gives them precedence over others (Croft 2007).

However, language is inconceivable without structure: we would hardly be able to recognise an utterance as linguistic without such structure. In the utterances we find regularities which we can model as phonological and grammatical descriptions. Nonetheless, and importantly, such descriptions of regularities can only be the product of an *interpretive observer*. Linguistic structure does not exist ‘objectively’, but is perceived as rules in interpreted observations when we more or less consciously categorise and structure our environment (Robinson 1997, 256). The regularities can be observed on two levels: first, they are unconsciously ‘observed’ and interpreted by the language users through their general abilities of categorisation and generalisation, and become input in their own use of language. Second, they can be observed by experts to make phonological and grammatical descriptions and write dictionaries of a language.

### **Statistics in cognition, individual and social aspects of language**

It is often put forward that linguistic structures exist as mental representations and cognitive rules, and we can indeed assume that there are conceptualisations in our minds which relate to language. There must be some sort of mental representations of phonological and semantic content of utterances. These are often said to be ‘conventional’, that is, there is a ‘sameness’ to such representations over the minds of many language users, so that they agree upon the expression and content of the utterance. In this sense linguistic structure exists, and it is meaningful to speak of a linguistic system with linguistic units (Langacker 1997, 231). But the descriptive models we can make of such linguistic structures do not correspond directly to the mental representations in our minds (Robinson 1997, 254;256), (Langacker 2001, 184). Language certainly happens within people’s heads, but we do not know exactly what happens, though we can study the products of the cognitive activity in what people say.

A possible way to explain the regularities of language is to conceive of cognition as working on a statistical basis: human cognition forms probabilistic abstractions on the basis of statistical recurrences of phenomena (Robinson

1997, 263). Each human being will form his own 'rules' based on the recurrences he or she has experienced in usage events of language. Frequency will play a large role to determine the actual content of the rules, because frequent phenomena will by sheer statistics leave stronger traces than less frequent ones (Bybee 2001, 6–10). There will be a constant adaptation to other people's language use, creating shared rules over time. As noted in 2.2.2 on page 28, these mechanisms become quite visible in large corpora of actual language use, because of the 'lexical priming' effect (Hoey 2005).

The linguistic structures thus attain conventional status in most cases, that is, they are shared by many speakers. In a fairly trivial sense, such knowledge can be said to be socially distributed: not all speakers of a given language will know all the formal possibilities of that language, all the words, uses, genres etc. This will apply at least to the children in any community, however small and linguistically homogenous it may be. This can be taken care of by acknowledging *variation*, in the form of dialects, sociolects, registers, even idiolects, as normal phenomena of human language (Milroy & Milroy 1997). Individuals will still be the locus of the linguistic systems per se, though they may simultaneously have command over several varieties which they manage according to a number of sociocultural constraints, as we shall see in the presentation of communicative competence in 2.1.1 on page 14.

In a less trivial sense, social distribution of linguistic structure means that linguistic structure has a 'double' existence. Even if the structures themselves may be said to reside in individual minds, they come to do so by *learning*. Each newborn individual starts out meeting pre-existing linguistic structures as used in the speech of others in their environment. Hence, language appears as a social fact beyond their personal existence to each language learner (Berger & Luckman 1966, 53), see also Erickson (2004, 158) and Goodwin (2006, 119). Language is part of the social institutions any child will meet, and it becomes part of her total socialisation process. What language structures the child will come to use herself, to know of as existing in the language use of other persons close to her, and to know of as marking members of out-group people, all this will depend on her social and cultural environment and its history. Although the child is cognitively predisposed to learn language, it is only through social interaction that such learning takes place. Her language will be her own, but it will be strongly marked by her experiences with other people's language use. In this sense, social distribution of language means that important aspects of language happens not only 'inside' people's heads, but between them in interaction. Language is learnt through interaction.

Language as a social fact displays large amounts of regularities. The regularities are adhered to by groups of people and make interindividual comprehension possible. They are not located at one time and place like an

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utterance, but exist as patterns shared by many individuals. Linguistic structure of the kind we model in grammars totally depend on interaction between human beings to come into existence. As such they are of the same kind as cultural patterns (Hill & Mannheim 1992, 382), (Langacker 1997, 240-41). While having traits in common by being based in the general cognitive setup of human beings, they are also products of historical and social processes in language, and usually part of historical and cultural processes outside language as well.

A moment's reflection will bring to mind a long line of linguists who will not adhere to the language view presented above, with Chomsky as a leading figure. Their vision of language is one of a rule-governed universal syntax, based ultimately on the genetic setup of human beings (Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch 2002, Bickerton 1998). Hopper (1998) calls this view A-Priori Grammar and notes its shortcomings in regard to an involvement with the study of interaction: it is "quintessentially monologic" by its postulation of "a perfect speaker-hearer in a completely homogeneous speech community" (Chomsky 1965, 3). All linguistic knowledge is here seen as stored in the individual speaker's mind, and have no relation to other material acts of communication. The contrast to emergent grammar, contingent on a group of interacting individuals who have to learn each structure from encounters with its material and historical use is startling. Obviously the latter view is a more rewarding view of language in an endeavour to analyse social interaction of any kind.

More will be said in later sections on more specific principles of cognitive linguistics and the interface with Bakhtin's ideas. However, before reviewing the general and the more specific aims of the dissertation, I will shortly address also the notion of practice.

### 1.1.2 Practice and communities

Running parallel to the important idea of *emergence* in grammar, there is a parallel idea of *structuration* found in social science (Giddens (1984) cited in Hopper (1998, 158)). Instead of taking one's point of departure from the idea of existing social structures, they can be seen as the products of sedimentation of frequent constellations in temporary subsystems. People come to act in certain ways over a period of time, and looking at it from the outside the structures appear, though those carrying out some act did not necessarily perceive themselves as taking part in a larger movement or structure. The notion of *practice* is one way of answering the question of why people so often act in concert and as if governed by the same regulations, though no explicit rules exist.

Bourdieu (1977) develops a theory with practice as the key concept, showing how social behaviour can be strongly regulated through embodied practices and cultural dispositions aligned with social classes to produce class *habitus*. His

work shows that the views that have “kept persons reduced to their minds, mental processes to instrumental rationalism and learning to the acquisition of knowledge” (Lave & Wenger 1991, 50) can be exposed. By developing a theory of practice we can come to see how social and culturally mediated experience is available to persons-in-practice.

Lave & Wenger (1991) build on the notion of practice in their studies of different forms of learning. Through the differing practices of the learning environment that they investigate, they build a theory of communities of practice as a necessary locus for learning. All learning must take place within a community which can give meaning to the knowledge. “Participation in the cultural practice in which any knowledge exists is an epistemological principle of learning” (Lave & Wenger 1991, 97). Practice is what all the participants in such a community engage in at some level.

Wenger (1998) develops the notion of community practice further, seeing them as places for identity and belonging as participants become transformed by learning and engage mutually with a joint enterprise.

This theory has inherited from other sociological theories of practice the basic idea of structuration which is quite compatible with the view of language as emergent, as presented in cognitive linguistics. The theory provides essentially a holistic view of groups of people where interaction takes place, in my case schoolclasses and groupings in the village setting. I shall use the notions of community of practice and practices extensively in the dissertation. More thorough discussions of the framework will be given later in Chapter 2 and Chapter 7.

### 1.1.3 Speech genres

A final key unit of analysis must be mentioned here: *speech genres*. The concept was originally coined by Bakhtin, but it has been used mostly as a synonyme for genre in genre theory, while it is fairly new to linguistics. I propose a somewhat more specific usage in the present work, using it as a main analytical category alongside practice.

The main impetus for using speech genres as an analytical category comes from regarding it as a linguistic unit and hence accessible to linguistic analysis. In my view a speech genre is part of linguistic structure alongside other signs. Bakhtin kept language as system and speech communication apart; in his day, the language system was seen as an A-Priori Grammar by most linguists. Bakhtin's solution was to keep speech communication and the language system strictly apart, to be able to treat utterances as belonging to living and growing chains of use. However, by virtue of the view of language presented in 1.1.1, it is possible to keep Bakhtin's vision of the dynamic and interactive nature of speech

communication together with an analysis of more structural characteristics. A fuller discussion of speech genres will come in Chapter 2.

### 1.2 General aims of the dissertation

An important goal of my work is to apply the cognitive linguistics paradigm to a relatively new field as far as the domain of application of cognitive linguistics is concerned: the analysis of social interaction. Interaction is synonymous with communication, and the main human system of communication is language, though other modes also exist. However, it is important to discuss to what extent it is possible and desirable to distinguish between linguistic communication and other modes. Moreover, there is a need to evaluate how relevant units of language use in interaction can be described within a cognitive linguistics model and how the Bakhtinian notion of *speech genres* as interactional tool can be put to use in such a model.

Human beings do not exist in a vacuum; on the contrary, they live in a socio-cultural environment growing out of the past and at all times influenced by ongoing societal processes. These are highly relevant factors also in the study of linguistic interaction, and should be accounted for.

Other theoretical frameworks treat such questions more than cognitive linguistics traditionally has done. I can mention three important approaches: the ethnography of speaking, which keeps an open eye for all kinds of communicative behaviour; language socialisation theory, which integrates the study of language learning with a total learning process in the socio-cultural environment and community of practice theory, which provides a way of understanding learning processes in groups engaged in joint enterprises. These perspectives, which are usually integrated in work applying them, are also highly relevant and need to be integrated with cognitive linguistics in the study of language in interaction. On the other hand, there is good reason to think that other research traditions can obtain deeper insights in interaction by taking up cognitive linguistics's approach to language. Another aim of the present thesis is to integrate these different research traditions in order to address the research question of the dissertation.

The subject matter of the present work must also raise questions about the relation between individual and social properties of language. It touches upon the question of whether language is a social phenomenon, existing only in interactional activity between human beings, or if it has its locus in the language-using individual. The answer to such a question closely concerns human cognition and human sociality. At the heart of the issue lies the matter of how language comes to be part of each new human being as he or she grows up. Hence the issue of the human capacity for learning and its counterpart, the capacity for teaching,

should be core areas of study to resolve the question of a social vs. an individual locus for language. My study can hopefully contribute to the ongoing discussion also of these highly complex topics.

The matters noted above are clearly complex, involving the nature of cultural transmission, the nature of learning generally and language learning specifically, the how's and why's of cognitive development, and the nature of and the role of context in language acquisition. Although the issues of teaching and learning have traditionally been the domain of studies with an educational or pedagogical point of departure, my approach is a linguistic one. Examining encounters of teaching and learning as linguistic interaction can provide us with an excellent point of departure for addressing the issues related to language, cognition and linguistics.

The last aim of this dissertation is more down to earth and concerns the data I work with. These data mainly deal with the Nizaa group in the district of Galim-Tignère, division of Faro and Deo, province of Adamoua in Cameroon. The Nizaa are a scantily described ethnic group with a rich history, language and cultural traditions. The present study aims to convey to the readers a sense of this richness, and to present how their particular way of living in the world has come about and how it continues in the transformation processes in the modern society of Cameroon. Such a knowledge of the Nizaa group provides an important basis for understanding teaching and learning among the children in this study. Hence an indepth ethnography is presented not only to document this little known community, but also to allow a rich interpretation of the data.

### **1.3 The setting of the study and research questions**

The data of the present study come from a rural multilingual area in Cameroon, and target the interaction of teaching and learning. By encompassing two contrasting settings, the general village life setting and the setting of modern schooling, these data provide an ideal locus for examining issues of interaction and cognition in teaching and learning.

Children in this area in Cameroon (as elsewhere) learn many things at home, both in general socialisation processes and in more specific teaching situations. It is of interest to investigate how adults and children go about this, and the forms of teaching and learning employed. Of special importance is the role language play and how language skills are learnt.

When the children of this area start school, they meet fairly large obstacles to communication. There are two closely related difficulties. The first is a more or less unknown language: all teaching is done in a language that is not their first language, and hence they cannot respond adequately to the teacher. The second difficulty is the more or less unfamiliar ways of using language and relating to

## 1.4. PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

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adults found in school. The students and teachers cope with these obstacles in some way or another, and the characteristics of their interaction have wider interest for other similar situations.

This context provides an excellent locus for addressing the research questions of this study.

### 1.3.1 Research questions

Speech genres will be the main analytical tool used in the analysis of teaching and learning interaction as found in schools and in informal village settings in Cameroon. Looking for speech genres in the detailed analysis of linguistic interaction will open the data up to a rich understanding of meaning in the unfolding of discourse, and hence provide a means for studying meaning within cognitive linguistics.

1. How are these speech genres used as cognitive and social resources in teaching and learning interaction?
2. How can the concept of speech genres contribute to develop the theoretical purview of cognitive linguistics?
3. How can typical forms of teaching and learning interaction be seen as emergent schematic structures of language?

## 1.4 Plan of the dissertation

After this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 on page 11 will review the relevant literature for the study, and describe more in depth the unit of analysis of speech genres that will provide the basis for the later analysis.

Chapter 3 on page 61 presents the methodology and discusses issues of data-collection and sampling.

Chapter 4 on page 91 spreads a wide overview of the historical, geographical and linguistic setting for the community under study, before narrowing down to how life is lived in the villages of the area.

Chapter 5 on page 139 then presents the analytical model and applies it to teaching and learning interaction in detailed analyses of interaction, in basketry teaching, children's gameplaying and the use of tales and riddles for cultural transmission to new generations.

Chapter 6 on page 215 gives a short overview of the Cameroonian school history and presents the local school facilities found in the Galim area.

Chapter 7 on page 235 brings in fully the perspective of community of practice, and uses this to describe important features of learning at school, from non-verbal practices to specific ways of interacting which emerge in different classes.

Chapter 8 on page 287 connects the prevalent pedagogical model in the school and its use in the *leçon* format with different speech genres found in the data.

Chapter 9 on page 349 summarises the findings of the analysis and draw the relevant conclusions.

Appendix A on page 357 gives a complete transcript of a Nizaa game playing session, while Appendix B on page 367 has a complete transcript of the lesson session which forms the main data of Chapter 8. Appendix C on page 385 lists the videorecorded data and shows a questionnaire used for data collection among the teachers.



## Chapter 2

# Ways of understanding linguistic interaction

In order to address the research questions in this dissertation, it is worthwhile to consider first some very general assumptions underlying much work in linguistics, concerning the ‘locus’ of language. From one point of view, language is a phenomenon situated in each human being, and hence language should be studied as a phenomenon pertaining to individuals. From another point of view, the real locus of language is a community or a social setting of some kind, since language after all is used for communication with others. Different theoretical frameworks take their points of departure from these very general stances. Some, notably within the sociolinguistic research tradition, start from the notion of a community and look at language use there. Others, typically within the general linguistics tradition, are more likely to start with language as located in individuals, and they are less concerned with the social meanings of language.

My own point of departure for the present study is the cognitive linguistics paradigm, which can be grouped with the latter type of research tradition, being occupied with language as pertaining to individual cognition. However, my object of study explicitly brings in a *social* aspect, using data of linguistic interaction in some specific communities in Cameroon. In order to analyse this interaction in an adequate way, I certainly need those research traditions that have been developed to deal with such phenomena. Still I hold on to the more individual-based approach of cognitive linguistics, and moreover claim that this research tradition has important insights that will shed new light on my data.

The first section of the present chapter will present three frameworks of social orientation, subsumed under the heading of ‘community-based’ approaches. These approaches to linguistic interaction are all concerned with language in its social setting. To some extent this also means that they have less regard for language as part of the cognitive endowment of human beings, and for the question

of how language come to be part of the interacting parties of a community.

In section 2.2 I bring in a quite different voice in the discussion of the locus of language, that of the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin. His notions of speech communication as a social phenomenon then forms a bridge to a presentation of my most basic framework, that of cognitive linguistics.

Instead of opting for either an individual-based or a community-based framework, the present work endeavours to integrate the different viewpoints, and to show that the discussion of whether language is ‘social’ or ‘individual’ is somewhat misguided: language is both. More specifically, there are good reasons to see language as consisting of structures *emergent* in communication, as noted in Chapter 1. This is a point of view deeply embedded in the cognitive linguistics paradigm, but also relevant to the other frameworks discussed in the present chapter.

The chapter will in this way discuss the contributions of the different frameworks to answer my research questions. The compatibility of the approaches is brought up in section 2.4. The research questions all revolve around the central notion of *speech genres*, a concept which will be more thoroughly presented in Section 2.5. The use of cognitive linguistics to analyse discourse will also be discussed in this section. Finally specific recent cognitive linguistic studies with a discourse analytical aim are discussed in Section 2.6, and some studies of teaching and learning from Cameroon are considered in 2.7. The contribution of my study is presented in Section 2.8.

### 2.1 Community-based approaches

The concept of community is important in several frameworks concerned with a social or interactive view of language. These frameworks seek to relate the use of language with a wider human context defined as some kind of community. The wider community provides each speaker with both resources and constraints in her use of language. There are norms of language use which simply do not become visible in a study focusing only on the individual use of language, they need a communal setting to appear. Language knowledge is also seen as distributed, so that a total description of a language entails features which are not shared by all its users.

In the following sections, I shall present three theoretical research traditions that have sided clearly with a social view of language.

### 2.1.1 The ethnography of communication approach

Much important research has been done within the research tradition of *ethnography of communication*, also called the ethnography of speaking, first and foremost developed by Dell Hymes in the 1960s and 70s, see e.g. (Hymes 1974). It grew up alongside other sociolinguistics frameworks such as the variationist analyses of Labov and the interactional sociolinguistics of Gumperz (Schiffrin 1994).

The ethnography of communication is concerned with *speech communities*. ‘Speech community’ has a history of use as an important theoretical construct in sociolinguistics, where it defines an aggregate of people by their common relation to a linguistic variety, rather than say, sociological variables. Hymes (1972, 54) defined speech community as “a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety,” thus bringing aspects of shared language norms into the definition.

Work within the ethnography of speaking research tradition builds on the insights of both linguistics and anthropology. Anthropology has a concern for holistic explanations of meaning and behaviour, locating particular behaviours in wider frameworks of beliefs, actions and norms. Linguistics contributes tools to handle linguistic data, analysing structures of both form and meaning. These two things were brought together by Hymes, who saw the grammatical system of a language as part of culture, used in linguistic communication (Schiffrin 1994, 138). Looking at language as part of culture, and at culture through language, opens new possibilities for understanding interaction.

The ethnography of communication is thus concerned with relating patterns of communication to sociocultural phenomena. This widens the object of study considerably, because any kind of communicative behaviour can be taken into consideration. Ideally, a researcher within this paradigm first defines at least tentatively the speech community to be studied, then works to get an understanding of its social organisation and other salient aspects of culture. The relevant categories and processes should be discovered in looking at different ways of life and different patterns of communication, rather than superimposed on the data as preconceived ideas of the structure of communication (Saville-Troike 1989, 107). Ethnography of communication thus focuses on a not only wide, but inherently open-ended, range of communicative behaviours (Schiffrin 1994, 137).

Communicative behaviours are found by using ethnographic methods such as participant observation and extensive interviewing of people. Hymes coined the SPEAKING grid as a methodological tool for discovering culturally relative communicative units, the largest unit being ‘the speech situation’. SPEAKING stands for Setting/Scene, Participants, Ends, Act sequences, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms of interaction and Genre. Types of data may be any

kind of background information such as geography and history, demographic data, material artefacts, lists of community institutions and other parts of social organisation, legal information from national law to court records, artistic data, 'common knowledge' which may crop up in other sources, beliefs about language use and data on the linguistic code, to cite the list in Saville-Troike (1989). Participant observation is clearly the most common method of data collection.

### **Communicative competence**

One of the key concepts that serves to integrate linguistic and anthropological perspectives is Hymes' notion of *communicative competence*. Hymes coined the term in a direct rejection of Chomsky's competence/performance dichotomy (Hymes 1972). His main point is that linguistic competence cannot be restricted to the tacit knowledge of abstract grammatical rules. For one thing, Chomsky's restriction of the area of interest to only ideal speaker-hearers in a completely homogenous speech community renders most data useless, since human beings normally exist in heterogenous speech communities and display a great deal of variation on a number of levels. Furthermore, the notion of the ideal speaker-hearers in a homogenous speech community makes linguistic theory itself fairly useless, in any attempt to deal with real life problems concerning language and communication. When the theory is designed to handle only this idealised situation, it can hardly be used to explicate linguistic problems of any kind.<sup>1</sup> Chomsky's program would also arbitrarily leave out the acceptability judgments based on sociocultural and contextual factors indexed by variation in language.

Instead Hymes proposes that there are several systems of rules underlying linguistic behaviour, pertaining to whether, and to what degree, something in language is:

1. Formally possible,
2. Feasible with the means available,
3. Appropriate in relation to a context of use and evaluation,
4. Occurring, and how often.

A normal member of a speech community will have available to him knowledge of all these aspects of the communicative systems, and will interpret and assess the conduct of himself and others according to them. By far the most important item in the list above is the notion of *appropriateness*: it concerns the ability to use language appropriately in concrete situations of everyday life: to engage

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<sup>1</sup>The article 'On communicative competence' is built on a paper from 1966, addressing a conference for people working with disadvantaged children, cfr. (Hymes 1972, endnote 292)

## 2.1. COMMUNITY APPROACHES

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in conversations, to shop in a store, to interview (and be interviewed) for a job, to joke, to pray, to argue, to tease, to greet persons in different relationships to oneself, and to know when to be silent (Schiffrin 1994, 140). Thus knowing a language as grammar and lexicon is not enough to be fluent in it, one must also know how to use the language.

Complete rule systems do not have to exist in all members of a community or a culture: One cannot assume that the formal possibilities of a system and the knowledge of an individual are identical, because each individual may have a partial knowledge of the system. Different individuals may have different knowledge even if manifestations of competence, and the apparent systems, are identical. A child will obviously not have as wide an experience of communicative situations as grown-ups, but even adult persons will constantly develop their particular competences through life (Hymes 1972). This ties in with the view of cognitive linguistics as described in 2.3 on page 30.

The concept of performance, which in Chomsky's version had been something of a residual category treating psychological restraints on output, now can be used of performances of persons, as we are used to in speaking of actors or singers. Hymes wants to use performance in the sense of event, which "may have properties (patterns and dynamics) not reducible to terms of individual or standardized competence. Sometimes, indeed, these properties are the point (a concert, play, party)." (Hymes 1972, 284-5) Hymes talks of studying the "variety of genres, narration, dance, drama, song, instrumental music, visual art, that interrelate with speech in the communicative life of a society", in terms of performances with underlying rules.

### **Language in education**

Hymes' work grew partly out of studies of language in education, especially education of native American children (Hymes 1980). Language in education has proved to be an important field of research, together with closely related subjects such as ethnography of education, see e.g. Spindler & Spindler (1987). One reason why this is so is the fact that the school setting so mercilessly displays that knowledge of language is inequally distributed and what consequences this can have for the students (Hymes 1980).

A classical study is *Ways with words* by Shirley Brice Heath (Heath 1983). It shows how the different language socialisation in three different American communities shapes children's opportunities in school, with main stream middle class 'townspeople' children coming out on top: they had been trained by their parents for school genres such as known-information questions and labeling objects. The working class white community of Roadville had some of the same things in their socialisation practices, but failed on others, such as developing

‘what if’ thinking. The working-class black community in the study, Trackton, emphasised quite different skills in their ways of using language, e.g. asking about what a thing ‘was like’ rather than asking about its name.

Heath’s insights could not have been found without looking at a much wider data material than simply language use in school, and using ethnographic methods. The book is also an early example of language socialisation theory, by its focus on the connection between patterns of language use and culturally based ideas on what children are and can be capable of, what they should learn to do, and how it was learned in the different communities treated in the study.

### 2.1.2 Relevance for the present work

The ethnography of communication has become a basic way of going about studying language in groups and communities, as it represents a systematic way of approaching an unknown community (sometimes also well-known communities) and discover and describe the relevant facts of how they communicate in that setting. The general field of linguistic anthropology uses many of the insights from Hymes and his followers, and so do other more specific research traditions, such as the language socialisation approach and the community of practice theory. The ethnography of communication rests on the assumption that language use is not based on mere grammatical rules, but on a totality of behavioural rules in a given situation, all of which play their part in communication.

In the present study, the ideas of ethnography of communication are applied in the description of the group under study, and by including non-verbal modes of expression in linguistic communication. Their basic assumption of a rule-governed communicative competence is not taken up, however, as I will propose a very different understanding of linguistic structures and rules. Their idea of the speech community is also found to be too loose for an in-depth analysis of interaction, though it can be used for talking about ‘the Nizaa speech community’, i.e. the speakers of Nizaa wherever they live in Cameroon.

### 2.1.3 The language socialisation approach

Studies of *language socialisation*, LS, build to a large extent on the general ideas of the ethnography of speaking, but it has become a vibrant field of research in its own right (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986, Garrett & Baquedano López 2002). Rather than the speech community concept, it has used the idea of a *cultural community* as a basis for its microanalyses of “everyday speech and conduct between caregivers and children, linking their practices and patterns to others expressed through myths, rituals, song, exchange, and other symbolic systems.” (Schieffelin 1990, 13). Thus these studies usually provide quite extensive

## 2.1. COMMUNITY APPROACHES

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overviews of the community and the culture in which the interaction takes place, and look for meaning-making patterns beyond the simple everyday meanings of exchanges.

### **Language and culture: linguistic relativity in a new setting**

The study of language socialisation has also revived interest in linguistic relativity and the ‘Sapir-Whorf-hypothesis’, by pointing out that children ‘acquire a world-view as they acquire language’ (Ochs 1987). However, the use of linguistic relativity in LS studies is not the traditional understanding of deterministic moulding of concepts through language, rather it is an awareness of the impact of language use patterns on actual interpretation, because language is part of culture.

Language is an important source of knowledge of culture, on several levels. The level most salient to the standard Western observer is the level of propositional knowledge. This is the kind of knowledge comparable to what is dispensed through verbal instruction in schools, but it is not the kind of knowledge which is the most important for LS studies. Neither is LS preoccupied with how different languages structure the world, in, say, the naming of flora and fauna, or kinship terms, or other categories and concepts studied by those working in the ethnomethodological or ethnoscience research traditions. In LS it is rather *the way in which language is used, by whom, to whom, saying what, in which way*, which is the main object of interest, because this indexes socially important categories of institutions, people and objects. Children learn through the use of language in context what to make of such categories, often without being told in so many words. At the same time, the language socialisation process may provide learners, and analysts, with more explicit formulations of ‘what everyone knows’ (Schieffelin 1990).

The goal of LS is to understand how persons become competent members of their social groups and the role of language in this process. Again the similarity of language and culture is pointed out: both “comprise bodies of knowledge, structures of understanding, conceptions of the world, and collective representations that are extrinsic to any individual” (Schieffelin 1990, 14-15). Culture is not ‘acquired’ as such: one acquires a set of practices that enables one to live in a culture.

### **The cultural community**

When describing language socialisation in small, homogenous societies as e.g. the Kaluli people studied by Schieffelin (1990), the idea of a cultural community presents itself as a useful analytical construct. Its concern with the reproduction

of cultural traits makes it relevant in a study of teaching and learning. A recent definition of cultural community is the following:

“By cultural community we mean a coordinated group of people with some traditions and understandings in common, extending across several generations, with varied roles and practices and continual change among participants as well as transformation in the community’s practices.”

—Gutiérrez & Rogoff (2003, 21)

The definition brings in the notion of intergenerational ‘understandings and traditions’ shared by the cultural community. A cultural community typically has a gamut of roles and practices defined according to life span and age groups, from the different phases of childhood, through adolescence and mature adulthood on to old age. All of these age groups are present in a cultural community and will have more or less defined roles and functions within the total picture of the community. A lifespan phase such as childhood can indeed usefully be seen as a structural category of any society (Corsaro 1997). Many practices of a cultural community thus have longstanding histories, though they are by no means immune to change. In a cultural community as described above, there will typically be a number of genres within the traditional material, that is, the items of knowledge handed down from earlier generations, with particular functions and features in community interaction. Genres as an important category for understanding linguistic interaction in a cognitive linguistics framework will be treated in 2.5.2 on page 42, together with ‘folklore genres’ in 2.5.3.

We have seen that LS is concerned with learning and communicative competence and with the role of language in these processes. It has affinities with research paradigms of situated learning and social practice, such as the ‘community of practice’ theory. The next section will present the community of practice approach and also look at the relation between this concept and the concept of cultural communities.

### 2.1.4 The community of practice approach

The sociolinguistic use of the community of practice (CofP) theory is based on Lave & Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998). As the name indicates, the theory has developed a particular notion of a certain kind of community, which is labeled a *community of practice*.

A community of practice is a place for the production of *meaning*, of *learning* and of *identity* (Wenger 1998). Meaning, (or better, meaningfulness, see Croft (2007, 13)), exists in the dynamic relation of living in the world with other people.



## 2.1. COMMUNITY APPROACHES

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The negotiation of meaningfulness is a productive process, where each person neither simply makes up meaning, or finds pre-existing meaning: “Practice is about meaning as an experience of everyday life” (Wenger 1998, 52).

In what is basically a theory of learning, a central idea is the *zone of legitimate peripheral participation*, that is, the leeway given newcomers in reproducing the practices characterising the community. Novices are allowed to perform substandardly, to ask questions and do things in a different way, while learning to be full-scale participants.<sup>2</sup>

CofP’s are important in forming personal identity: they become places of belonging. They are not mutually exclusive, on the contrary, people normally belong to several communities simultaneously, e.g. one at work and another in the family. The multimembership makes for constant trade-offs between the different communities, in use of time and energy, in acquiring identities and integrating different arenas. Both participation and non-participation in communities of practice are part of forming an identity: you can be a non-member, or a peripheral member on an inbound trajectory, a peripheral member preferring to stay in the margin of the practice group, or finally a marginal member being kept in the periphery.

Specific ways of talking are typically something developed by communities of practice. The theory has therefore been used in a number of sociolinguistic studies, one of the first being Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (1992) on language and gender. Their definition of a CofP follows:

“An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations –in short, practices –emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor. As a social construct, a CofP is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages.”

—Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (1992, 464)

The usefulness of the community of practice notion as compared to speech communities lies in capturing a more dynamic view of groups. The community of practice is seen as an aggregate of people revolving around some mutual goal or engagement. This is clearly not necessarily the case with speech communities (Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999, 178). CofP’s are defined both by membership in the group and by the practices engaged in by the members of the group. This

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<sup>2</sup>The ‘zone of legitimate peripheral participation’ is clearly related to Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development”; however, Wenger (1998, 280) cites Vygotsky’s activity theory (Vygotsky 1934) as having a different focus from his own theory of learning.

also differentiates it from social networks theory, which does not require a joint engagement and a shared goal all over the network (Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999, 180). As for its relation to cultural communities, see p. 22.

### **Defining criteria of a community of practice**

Communities of practice are characterised by mutual engagement in a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire for communication (Wenger 1998). The mutual engagement comes about as the participants actually are doing things together. Physical proximity is not a prerequisite, though it often helps. The interaction can be by telephone, mail or the Internet, as long as there is some form of mutual contact. Even when participants are in conflict over something, they can be seen as having interpersonal relationships, and developing them through the conflict.

The relationships within the community involve the competence of the participants, whether it is a matter of filling different roles and having complementary functions, as in a medical operating team, or if it is a matter of overlapping competence for participants having similar functions (Wenger 1998, 76).

Over time a community of practice develops a shared repertoire for communication as resources for the negotiating of meaning. As such, the shared repertoire both indicates the existence of a community and is an important part of its day-to-day reproduction. It includes “routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice.” (Wenger 1998, 83).

The defining point of a community of practice is thus actual interaction of people over time, making a more or less recognised group emerge. Such a group will, according to Wenger (1998) be characterised by:

1. A mutual engagement.
2. A joint negotiated enterprise.
3. A shared repertoire for communication.

Mutual engagement typically involves interaction: relationships between a number of people forming a community of practice are built on their actual interaction with one another. They are brought together for this interaction by some joint enterprise. The enterprise may be an explicitly stated shared goal, or it may be implicit and informal. In both cases it will be negotiated by the participants as the production of the practice of the community evolves (Wenger 1998, 80). As time goes by, the joint pursuit of the enterprise will result in a shared repertoire of resources for negotiating meaning, which in itself is one

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of the three criterial characteristics cited above. It will exist in varying degrees in different communities of practice.

### **Learning and identity**

Community of practice theory started out as a theory of learning, especially the ways of learning displayed in master-apprenticeship systems. Learning is an integral part of any community of practice, as people adjust to each other and the tasks they are sharing. The idea of core members, who know how to carry out the practices, and new members in a zone of legitimate peripheral participation where they are allowed to be non-experts, is a notion which has proved very useful in understanding learning.<sup>3</sup> Communities of practice have zones of peripheral participation, where legitimate but as yet non-competent members can learn the game. Nevertheless, as new members enter a group, they will often subtly change the practices of the group: communities of practice are to a certain extent always in a state of flux. New people come in, practices are maintained but somewhat changed, core members are displaced by the newcomers etc.

Learning is an experience of identity, because learning transforms who we are and what we do. The learner enters new practices and becomes competent in more areas than before. Successful learning will change a person's identity by giving access to new communities of practice.

### **School as a locus for communities of practice**

Schools as institutions bring together a collection of children for instruction in whatever subject society finds it necessary for them to learn. Usually some notion of citizenship is supposed to be inculcated in the children in addition to knowledge of all kinds, from reading and writing to advanced mathematics. Schools clearly are important arenas for learning new practices and transforming identities. They are publicly recognised as such arenas, it is in fact their very reason for being.

When children have completed school they are supposed to have become useful members of society, ready to take up positions in the work force where they are needed. On the largest scale, the whole educational system may thus be seen as one great zone of legitimate peripheral participation preparing students to become competent participants in the practice of society. It is, however, in a more

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<sup>3</sup>These ideas have actually become useful in a quite mundane sense as well: they are often used as a way of enhancing productivity in corporate settings, by understanding how to facilitate, instead of hinder, this kind of learning. Wenger (1998) is a study of a large American insurance company and shows how the claims processors' practical knowledge of their tasks is acquired by participating in work practices and in interaction with co-workers.

fine-grained perspective that the theory of communities of practice can be most useful.

It should come as no surprise that schools, and classes within each school, regularly develop into communities of practice: The students daily engage in intense interaction with one or several teachers and with one another, for years. Ways of talking, ways of doing and a range of other traits (Wenger 1998, 125–6) are not difficult to discover. The perspective of CofP allows the analyst to connect various disparate traits within a comprehensive frame, thus making better sense of them.

What may be surprising to those in charge of education, however, is that the relation between what is taught and what is learned in school may be less strong than planned. Many of the practices learnt in class may have next to nothing to do with the official curriculum, but still may be much more pervasive in transforming the identities of the students.

### **Cultural communities and communities of practice**

As noted in 2.1.3 on page 16, the concept of *cultural communities* has been a useful category in studies of language socialisation. The community of practice, on the other hand, has been successfully used in studies of the linguistic features of groups forming in schools and workplaces. Both of these community-concepts arise not so much from linguistics, as from more anthropologically oriented research traditions. How are these two concepts of communities related to each other, and do we need both in an attempt to understand patterns of linguistic interaction?

The difference between the analytical categories of a cultural community and a community of practice lies in the longer time span of a cultural community as compared to a community of practice. There is an intergenerational aspect in the notion of a cultural community which is largely lacking in a community of practice, though both kinds of communities are concerned with learning.

The participants in different age-related practices in a cultural community are surrounded by people who have themselves participated in the same practices earlier, but now have gone on to other practices in their own lives. They still share the understandings and the traditions of the practices which now are carried out by new members. There is in this way a store of knowledge in the whole population which must be taken into consideration, as it will often affect the way the present participants go about carrying out a certain practice. This is of course not radically different from how a community of practice works, except for the intergenerational aspect. The community of practice is, therefore, a more useful category in those cases where aggregates of people do not have such longterm, generational relationships with each other, while they still can be defined as a

## 2.1. COMMUNITY APPROACHES

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group with some definite characteristics, as we saw in the preceding subsections. It can be used of groups on a much smaller scale than a cultural community as defined earlier.

The distinction between different types of communities is not in any case strict, however. Cultural communities will often double as communities of practice: the participants engage in joint enterprises, and practices are developed and transformed by new generations growing into them. A village, a neighbourhood or a family can certainly develop their own community of practice within the larger cultural community, with their own ways of engaging with each other. The joint enterprise of such communities may be less clearcut than in some prototypical communities of practice; maybe they all simply work to make a living and at the same time maintain good relations with their neighbours. Such groups often share a repertoire of communication, however, based on longtime interaction and intimate knowledge of each other. New participants, in the form of children born into the group, come to learn the practices of the group in quite parallel fashion to those described for communities of practice, through a zone of legitimate peripheral participation.

### 2.1.5 Relevance of community concepts in the present study

As far as the present study is concerned, both the two last types of community concepts presented above have been found to be useful, while the notion of speech community plays a much less important role.

The community of practice approach has proven itself most useful in the analysis of classroom interaction by providing a global perspective on what is going on there. The class and their teacher as a group engage in the joint enterprise of 'doing school,' (see 7.1.1) and language use patterns are part of the total practice.

On the other hand, in looking at village interaction the community of practice perspective is also necessary, but not sufficient. The children I observed clearly moved within a cultural community, relating to parents and grandparents and an assortment of other relatives and neighbours. They carried out many of the same tasks and were subject to many of the same expectations as their parents had been as children. The games they played had been developed by earlier generations, and the tales told to and by children were traditional ones. They shared language and interactional patterns with earlier generations. Still, it is necessary to see each group of children interacting on an everyday basis, also as communities of practice in the sense of local peer culture groups. In the steadily ongoing interpretive reproduction of culture in any cultural community, children "produce a series of local peer cultures that become part of, and contribute to, the wider cultures of other children and adults within which they are embedded" (Corsaro 1997, 95).

In the web of practices carried out by children in the here-and-now, but actually belonging to all generations, the community of practice is necessary to describe the particular interaction of local groups. Children develop local peer cultures in a dynamic reinterpretation of the materials given them by earlier generations, and produce their own cultural expressions.

After reviewing these more community-based approaches in the preceding section, I will bring in a perspective which is comparatively rare in linguistics (see Hopper (1998), though). It comes from the work of Bakhtin, and I present his thoughts as a bridge between the community-based approaches presented above and the individual-based approach of cognitive linguistics which will be presented in 2.3.

### 2.2 A Bakhtinian perspective on communication

The work of the great Soviet-Russian literary theoretist and language philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) has interesting relations to more recent research on language and interaction. Some of his work goes back to the 1920s and 30s, but did not have much of an impact on Western scholarship till the late 1960s, when translations of his works began to penetrate the field of several humanistic sciences. Since then, his ideas have gained increasing importance in literary and cultural theory, aesthetics and philosophy of language. Several of his notions inform the present analysis, first and foremost the category of *speech genres*, as will be seen in the following chapters. My discussion here is based on the essay *The problem of the speech genres*, published in English in 1986.

Rather than entering the discussion of language as individually or socially located, Bakhtin treats in the essay the complicated problem of the interface between language as a system of linguistic structures and its use in actual utterances. He strongly emphasizes the difference between *speech communication* and *language*. Language corresponds more or less to the notion of *langue* in de Saussure's work, but speech communication does not correspond to *parole*. In de Saussure's idea, *parole* is the language user's free and expressive use of the language system: within the grammatical boundaries set by the system, he can choose his wording as he wants to (Bakhtin 1986, 81). Bakhtin shows that this is not the case: the utterances in speech communication are constrained by what he labels *speech genres*: relatively stable and typical forms of construction of the whole utterance. In his view speech genres do not belong to language: they cannot be considered rules of the same kind as grammatical rules, because they pertain to utterances, the unit of speech communication, and not to the units of language. I shall return to the concept of speech genres below, after looking at sentences and utterances, the units of language and of speech communication respectively.

### 2.2.1 “The utterance is an exceptionally important node of problems”

While words and sentences are units of *language* and defined by grammatical boundaries, utterances are units of *speech communication*.<sup>4</sup> Words and sentences, being units of the language system, have no expressivity of their own: they belong to nobody. Sentences relate only to other sentences within the same context, not directly to utterances of other speakers. They lack the capability of determining an active response from other participants, as long as they are not integrated into an utterance. They can of course be taken up by a speaker and function as an utterance, but expressivity and addressivity (see below) are not inherent properties of sentences.

Utterances, on the other hand, belong to their speaker and the speech situation, and as seen in the citation of the heading to this section, they constitute a major theme in Bakhtin’s thought (Bakhtin 1986, 63). They are links in the evergrowing chains of speech communication within the different spheres of human activity. As such they have a beginning and an end: these are marked by the change of the subject speaking. They always belong to a concrete speech situation: utterances connect to what happens in the real world. In Bakhtin’s view everything from a short word up to a scientific monograph or a novel may be a single utterance, getting its boundaries from the utterances of other speakers before and after it (Bakhtin 1986, 71-2). Besides this interactionally based definition of utterances, he uses features of content and form, seen as coming from particular genres. According to Bakhtin, typical aspects of an utterance as a whole are:

1. Semantic exhaustiveness of the theme
2. The speaker’s plan or speech will
3. Typical compositional and generic forms of finalization

Bakhtin does not explicate these aspects much, but simply claims that they tell the participants in the conversation whether a particular utterance or text is complete or not.

To my mind, Bakhtin’s understanding of speech communication organisation foreshadows the later work of Conversational Analysis: he actually describes in a non-technical way the turn-taking organisation of communication. The place for the change of the speaking subject is recognisable: there is a *finalization* point of each utterance which he calls ‘the inner side of the change of speech subjects’, (Bakhtin 1986, 76, see also 71-2). The change can take place because the speaker has said everything he wishes to say at that moment, and the listener can sense

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<sup>4</sup>This is also the import of Tomasello’s (2000) definition of utterance cited in 2.3.2 on page 32.

a possibility of responding to it. In the terms of Conversational Analysis, the speaker has reached a transition-relevance place, at which point he can select another participant for the next turn, or another person can self-select for that turn (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974).

Bakhtin also gives a list of relations that he claims cannot exist between units of language, only in communication between rejoinders of dialogue: “relations between question and answer, assertion and objection, assertion and agreement, suggestion and acceptance, order and execution, and so forth—” (1986, 72). One is strongly reminded of adjacency pairs as described in Schegloff & Sacks (1973, 295-96). Such relations are only possible among utterances of different speech subjects, thus they presuppose *other* participants.

An utterance is always directed to someone, it has *addressivity* (Bakhtin 1986, 95). In speech communication, the speaker seeks to evoke a response from other participants in the speech situation. The listener is not just a passive ‘understander’ of what is said, he takes an active, responsive attitude towards it. The response may come in the form of a verbal rejoinder, but also in some responsive action, or it may be delayed till later: “Any understanding of live speech, a live utterance, is inherently responsive, although the degree of this activity varies extremely” (Bakhtin 1986, 68). A consequence of this is that the listener will have an impact on the utterance of the speaker, who in planning his speech turn will try to elicit certain responses to his utterance and avoid others (Bakhtin 1986, 94). Since communication is dialogic, the speaker is also a listener: when other participants answer his rejoinder, the roles are changed.

### 2.2.2 Speech genres and voices

As I noted above, utterances are cast in more or less stable types, called speech genres. The different speech genres arise in, and are linked to, different spheres of human activity. Primary speech genres abound in everyday oral communication, secondary speech genres arise in more complex and organised cultural communication. The secondary speech genres, such as “novels, dramas, and all kinds of scientific research,” (Bakhtin 1986, 62), absorb various primary or simple speech genres, like dialogic conversation, private letters, and other speech genres directly reflecting reality. When they are incorporated into secondary genres, such primary genres alter their character, they do not reflect the real world any longer, but rather the constructed reality of the work they appear in. Both primary and secondary genres are important for obtaining a true understanding of utterances and style.

Both primary and secondary speech genres can be more or less rigid, or open, to individual choice. As a literary theorist, Bakhtin was interested in the possibility of individual style and expressivity, and aware of how different genres



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can either restrain or be conducive to expressivity. Some of the genres, both primary and secondary, are so rigid as to leave the speaker almost no choice of individual expressivity, others are more open (Bakhtin 1986, 78-9). When the genre is rigid and prescriptive, the only possibility of personal expression may lie in the choice of a particular genre over another, or in the smallest modulations of intonation and tone (Bakhtin 1986, 79). Military drill orders can serve as an example of a rigid genre, they even have preordained intonation contours, and the only possible answers are either some action required by the order, or formally highly constrained answers like ‘Yes, sir!’ More open genres mentioned by Bakhtin are genres of salon and table conversations, intimate conversations among friends or in the family and so on (Bakhtin 1986, 80).

Bakhtin uses as examples of everyday genres “greetings, farewells, congratulations, all kinds of wishes, information about health, business and so forth,” (Bakhtin 1986, 79). The number of genres is not fixed, and there is as yet no fixed principle for categorising genres. Actually Bakhtin notes that

“The wealth and diversity of speech genres are boundless because the various possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible, and because each sphere of activity contains an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and grow as the particular sphere develops and becomes more complex.”

— Bakhtin (1986, 60)

Their use depends on the situation, and the social position and interrelations of the participants involved. For example greetings can be strictly official and formal manifestations of respectfulness, or they can be informal acknowledgements of friends and family. In both cases the forms are quite stable: an ordinary person would not greet a friend using court protocol, neither would a head of state, let alone his assistant, receive a visiting dignitary by saying ‘Hi, buddy!’ Each genre has its own typical conception of the addressee of the utterances inherent in its compositorial form, this is part of its definition as genre (Bakhtin 1986, 95).

Speech genres make it possible for the listeners to predict the length, content and structure of another’s utterance, often from the very first word. They are tacit knowledge: we can use different genres with ease and accuracy without ever thinking about their existence. Importantly, they are learned side by side with the forms of language, and “organize our speech in almost the same way as grammatical (syntactical) forms do.” (Bakhtin 1986, 78). Bakhtin still holds that speech genres differ essentially from language forms, being much more flexible, plastic and free as compared to the stable and normative language forms.

A good command of the speech genres of an activity sphere is necessary to be able to participate easily in communication. Bakhtin takes as example a person

who may have excellent command of say, academic discourse, but is silent or very awkward in social conversation. His problem is not a lack of vocabulary or style per se, but a lack of command of the necessary genres: “the lack of a sufficient supply of those ideas about the whole of the utterance that help to cast one’s speech quickly and naturally in certain compositional and stylistic forms, the inability to grasp a word promptly, to begin and end correctly,” (Bakhtin 1986, 80)

A final point to be mentioned here is Bakhtin’s notion of *voices*. Utterances are always a part of chains of communication, cast in the genres belonging to some particular sphere of activity. Therefore they are not indifferent to each other, but reflect other utterances. Words and sentences, even the conventional intonation contours assigned sentence types such as assertions or questions, are only tools, they are not truly expressive of any emotion unless they are used in an utterance in a real situation, (Bakhtin 1986, 90). Then they obtain such qualities. But units of language can take along their expressive use in actual utterances into responding utterances. Each utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication. Thus the utterances of others’ become part of new utterances, as they completely or partly are brought into other utterances “retaining their alien expression” (Bakhtin 1986, 91). These ‘other voices’ bring the intentions of other speakers into the discourse, either incorporated into the speech plan of the speaker, or thwarting his intentions by making his own voice disappear.

Bakhtin’s notion of voices has been used in perceptive analyses of how ‘majority’ or ‘authoritative’ discourses penetrate into the discourses of minorities of different kinds, and how their own voices still may crop up in acts of resistance to the official discourse, see for example Sola & Bennet (1985).

### **Lexical priming in speech genres**

Interestingly, the new science of corpus linguistics has come up with some results that can be useful in understanding the notion of the Bakhtinian concept of speech genres. Looking at collocation patterns, Hoey (2005) shows how words and expressions are strongly biased to collocate in texts. The most likely explanation for this phenomenon is *priming*. Every word is mentally primed for collocational use (Hoey 2005, 8), because language users have met with them in certain contexts. The lexical priming effects are often nested, so that whole phrases become eligible for further collocational patterns. Such collocational patterns, semantic and pragmatic associations, and the fact that particular words are attracted to, or avoid, particular grammatical constructions (colligational patterns), fit right into the notion of typical forms of utterances. Different domains (or spheres of activity) will have different collocational patterns, in other words,

different speech genres.

The issue of the relationship between individual and social aspects of language and language use crops up through these findings. The lexical priming patterns are necessarily stored in individuals, but often enough they affect large numbers of people, making common collocational patterns visible in large corpora of language use. They are certainly an explanation of the fact that other people's utterances and general 'ways of speaking' so often crop up in new utterances. Priming effects from frequent collocations bring with them both the expressivity of former utterances, and the naturalness and ease of speaking from a mastery of a repertoire of speech genres that Bakhtin noted.

### 2.2.3 Relevance of Bakhtin for the present work

Bakhtin's ideas have informed the present study in quite basic ways. First, he proposes a fundamental critique of de Saussure's simple dichotomy between *langue* and *parole*, the system of a language and its use by speakers and hearers. In Bakhtin's view there is a much stronger division between the language as a system of grammatical rules and units and utterances as units of communication used in actual interaction. The sentence and the utterance are fundamentally different; in a more modern phrasing we could say that the sentence lacks the intentionality which is the heart and soul of the utterance (Levinson 2006, 45).

Second, *parole* is not a free use of the linguistic system, instead speakers are part of communities and enter chains of earlier communication on every subject. In the always developing discourse of a sphere there are typical formulations of utterances and certain ways of communication, which Bakhtin calls *speech genres*. The speech genres are 'guides' for communication, as it were, much more flexible than language rules, but still shaping utterances. A mastery of the speech genres in different settings is necessary to pull off a successful performance as discourse participant. The notion of speech genres is a very useful idea for describing how language use works, by identifying the set ways of saying things in a certain context as relevant for communication, without petrifying them as unchangeable, rule-governed forms.

Bakhtin did not in his essay on speech genre operationalise his ideas to any great extent, and he did no detailed analysis comparable to the work of the present dissertation. In some ways he was at an impasse between his view of language as a predefined system and his view of communication as a living, changing thing. In the present work I take up Bakhtin's notion of speech genres and develop it as an analytical construct by positing speech genres as *emergent* linguistic units 1.1.1. This is only possible by building on a different view of language, viz. the view of cognitive linguistics.

I will now first present the basic tenets of cognitive linguistics in 2.3 and

show their compatibility with the community-based approaches in 2.4, before discussing in more detail an integration of Bakhtin's program and the cognitive linguistics paradigm in 2.4.4.

### **2.3 Cognitive linguistics: an individual-based approach**

The research paradigm of *cognitive linguistics* is, as the name indicates, strongly concerned with language as it exists in cognition. Since cognition operates on an individual basis, cognitive linguistics normally maintains that individuals are the locus of language. Some basic ideas of the research done within this paradigm is presented below. The list is not meant to be complete, and other lists could be made, but the tenets listed here are all central to cognitive linguists.

#### **2.3.1 Basic ideas of Cognitive linguistics**

The most basic idea of cognitive linguistics is to view language as closely integrated with other cognitive abilities. According to cognitive linguistics, the linguistic abilities are integrated with other mental capacities of human beings, such as perception and memory. Linguistic abilities draw on general capabilities to recognise patterns, to generalise, and to imitate behaviour. Such general capabilities can be used to explain a great number of linguistic categories and patterns. The human species clearly has an innate predisposition or faculty for language use, or rather a capacity for socially coordinated behaviour, and this capacity is way beyond anything found in animals. Nevertheless, there is little evidence for this being a separate mental module, maybe located in a specific compartment of the brain (Levinson 2003, Levinson 2006, Langacker 1997, 239). On the other hand, language structures can tell us something about other cognitive structures, called for example *image schemas* by Langacker (1987). To the extent that language structures vary typologically, we can perhaps even distinguish between schemas expressed in a particular type of language, and universal schemas built on cognitive body images (Hill & Mannheim 1992, 393-394).

We can note several points of the research program of cognitive linguistics which are important to the choice of theoretical approach and methodology for understanding patterns of linguistic interaction.

First, the 'content requirement' of cognitive linguistics restricts linguistic objects to those that are directly apprehended by language users, or else derived from such directly apprehended structures through the basic cognitive processes

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of schematisation and categorisation (Langacker 1997, 235). This puts actual language data as used in communication on centre stage.

Secondly, by putting aside the idea that language somehow arises in the child more or less in spite of his or her linguistic environment, cognitive linguistics invites an empirical research strategy on both the process and the input (Tomasello 2000, 67-69). Cognitive linguistics acknowledges that "acquiring a language involves learning a truly prodigious amount of specific detail, mostly via social interaction," (Langacker 1997, 240), see also Langacker (2000, 91). The understanding of the process will again require data from actual language use together with other input experienced by children in particular sociocultural settings.

The third point concerns semantics: the principle of encyclopaedic semantics refuses to draw a strict line between semantics (linguistic knowledge), and pragmatics (extralinguistic knowledge). The very meaning of linguistic expressions is derived from multiple realms of knowledge and experience, and from the communicative context in which it is used (Langacker 1997, 237, 240-1). It follows from this that semantic structure will change as experience grows, that immediate and more distant context will influence it, and that it is impossible to pinpoint every shade of meaning. Different linguistic categorisations of lifeworlds will be normal and expected. Cognitive linguistics also opens up the possibility of integrating cultural differences in the description, by allowing for linguistic patterns related to cultural image schemas.

A fourth point is the denial of full compositionality: one cannot fully determine the meaning of a complex expression by deriving it from the meanings of its compositional elements (Langacker 1997, 247). Instead the speaker and addressee are seen as having critical roles by their active engagement in the speech context: the full meaning of a complex expression is always somewhat divergent from what is predictable from conventional meanings of the parts (Langacker 1997, 247).

### 2.3.2 Usage-events and schemas

Two notions in cognitive linguistic theory deserve a more thorough discussion, namely *usage-events* and *schemas*.

The notion of usage event should not be confused with *speech event* used in much sociolinguistic work; that is a more abstract category. 'Usage event' is a concrete category: it is the actual use of some linguistic item, be it a morpheme, a construction or a word, or some other entity abstracted as a commonality over many similar events. It goes without saying that any stretch of discourse contains usage events of a number of different linguistic units. Even so, actual language use normally comes in larger chunks than morphemes and even words. Therefore it is

meaningful to speak of usage events as having a comprehensive conceptualisation and comprising an expression's full contextual understanding, paired with an elaborate vocalisation (Langacker 2001, 144).

Any usage-event has two 'poles': The phonological 'pole' comprises the utterance in all phonetic detail, while the semantic 'pole' consists of the conceptual content with its full contextual understanding (Langacker 1987, 81-2), (1997, 235). Semantic structure is considered 'conventionalized conceptual structure' (Langacker 1991, 108-109), but nonetheless the meaning is shaped anew by the participants in each usage-event (Langacker 2001). The pairing of the two poles establishes a symbolic structure.<sup>5</sup> In cognitive linguistics only phonological structures, semantic structures and their pairings, the symbolic structures, are considered ascribable to a linguistic system. All kinds of linguistic units emerge by the same cognitive process of progressive *entrenchment* of recurrent commonalities (Langacker 2001, 147).

Based on the general human cognitive ability for categorisation and generalisation, cognitive linguistics sees linguistic structures as *schemas* extracted from many usage events. The notion of schemas to capture commonalities of meaning over many usage events is made extensive use of in different branches of cognitive linguistics research. Symbolic structures are schematic, always allowing for greater detail in actual usage (Langacker 1987, 132). This also means that linguistic units underdetermine local meaning in actual usage events. Schematic symbolic structures exist on several levels, as morphemes, as words, as constructions, as grammatical classes, and as texts.

The grounding of linguistic units in actual usage-events leads to looking at the utterance, not the word or the sentence, as the basic psycholinguistic unit. Utterances are in many cognitive linguists' view "a linguistic act in which one person expresses towards another, within a single intonation countour, a relatively coherent communicative intention in a communicative context" (Tomasello 2000, 63). Cognitive linguistics share with most functionalist views of language the basic ideas that *language in use* is what defines the relevant linguistic units, not grammatical categories (Schiffrin 1994).

Studying actual language use, or discourse, will thus reveal the linguistic rules the participants abide by, and give us a glimpse of how these same rules are modified in the process. Actual utterances in actual usage-events are the most important data for identifying linguistic structure, in the form of schemas. Rules of the linguistic system are not absolute, but probabilistic: they are usage-based, on all levels.

Much important work has already been done within the research paradigm

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<sup>5</sup>This is, of course, a reformulation of de Saussure's notion of the *sign*, consisting of *signifier* and *signified* (de Saussure [1916]1966, 66).

of Cognitive linguistics, on issues of both synchronic language description and in historical linguistics. However, comparatively few studies have explored discourse analysis and interactional data from actual language use. I will come back to this in 2.4.1.

## 2.4 Compatibility of approaches

In the preceding sections I have presented five different frameworks for analysing linguistic interaction, grouped as individual-based and community-based theoretical approaches. The work of Bakhtin does not readily fall into either category, of course: as a literary critic, he was certainly concerned with the individual voices of authors, but he also had a clear notion of the role of interaction and society in speech communication.

All of the frameworks bring in useful perspectives on the issue of linguistic interaction patterns at home and in school, and will be used in the analysis of my data. However, using several theoretical inroads to a subject requires that these are basically compatible with each other. I will in the following sections show that this is indeed the case, even though my use of cognitive linguistics as main point of departure is not a common choice in discourse analysis.

### 2.4.1 Cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis

Cognitive linguistics has sometimes been accused of lacking a concern for discourse and social interaction, as admitted by Langacker in his article on discourse in cognitive grammar (Langacker 2001, 185). While according to Langacker, the framework of cognitive linguistics is conducive and even necessary to the study of social interaction, this does not mean that much work within the cognitive paradigm actually has had such a focus.

In part this is due to the fact that interaction is a broader area of study than what is traditionally understood as the object of linguistics, as discussed already by de Saussure (de Saussure [1916]1966). In contrast to this view, Goodwin (2006, 118) in a recent linguistic anthropology study defines utterances as “multiparty, multimodal activities constructed through the mutual elaboration of different kinds of signs.” In his view, talk is but one carrier of communication, albeit a crucial one, as it works together with gesture and the local surrounding in which the interaction takes place. This aspect is often overlooked in other studies using the cognitive linguistics paradigm, though Langacker does try to bring attention to such ways of communication as gestures in his article on discourse and cognitive grammar (Langacker 2001).

The broader field of cultural practices is frequently forgotten in the search for linguistic patterns as indexes of cognitive schemas (Hill & Mannheim 1992, 394). This ‘linguacentrism’ has led to relating a pattern in one form of linguistic organisation to a pattern in another, instead of looking for patterns in nonverbal cultural or cognitive practices. Slobin’s work (see e.g. (Slobin 1991)) is a case in point: he uses grammatical patterning as an independent variable and narrative strategy as the dependent variable, but these are both linguistic patterns. The same critique applies to Quinn and Sweetser’s work on cultural models and scenarios: no other cultural evidence beside the linguistic is used ((Quinn 1982, Quinn 1987, Quinn 1991, Sweetser 1987) cited in Hill & Mannheim (1992)).

Generally, cognitive linguists have also shared with the structuralist tradition in linguistics an interest for the structures of language, often making them more static than need be. The phenomena which are recurrent over ‘many usage events’ (in some studies simply taken to be the meanings found by introspection, as pointed out by Gibbs (2006)), the schemata of meaning, are taken to be the most important objects of investigation, and the fleshed-out, negotiated meaning of their actual use in a certain situation is not studied. More interest has also been invested in the meanings of words and constructions, with work on semantic networks and grammatical constructions, than on higher level units such as genre schemata, or conversational schemata. Talk as social action and speakers as social agents are aspects of language use which have been largely overlooked.

The present study will contribute to the development of a discourse analysis based on cognitive linguistics.

### 2.4.2 Language in use

One characteristic that unites all of the chosen approaches is a strong concern with language *in use*, though each has its own accents on this common theme.

Growing out of the basic interest for language in use, cognitive linguistics contributes an important aspect to the study of linguistic interaction by its model for how linguistic structures arise: they are seen as emerging from repeated usage events, becoming entrenched in individual language users. In other words, linguistic structures are learned, and this learning takes place in interaction with others. This connects well to more community-based approaches, such as language socialisation and the community of practice paradigm. Especially the latter is basically a theory of learning, with a quite similar view of how participants come to learn the practices of their community.

I will show below that the framework for studying interaction also exists within the cognitivist paradigm, and that the basic ideas of cognitive linguistics can be coupled with theories more directly concerned with interaction, through its emphasis on encyclopedic semantics and usage-based structures. There is a



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shift in focus involved, though: other theoretical approaches insist much more than e.g. Langacker does, that talk *is* social action, that it is practice, and that talk also creatively constructs practice by its very use in interaction (Scollon 2001). Thus while using cognitive linguistics as a base, there is good reason to employ the perspectives and methods of other theories such as the ethnography of speaking, language socialisation, and community of practice theory discussed in 2.1. They systematically look for significant uses of language in interaction and social action, and with their broader view of communication are indispensable for understanding what is going on in such places as Cameroonian homes and classrooms.

### 2.4.3 Linking body, actions and linguistic usage

All of the approaches presented in 2.1.1, 2.1.3 and 2.1.4 have drawn attention to other aspects of interaction than the strictly verbal. In the case of the ethnography of communication this arises naturally from the basic openness of the category of communicative behaviour which is part of this research tradition, see p. 13. Linking verbal and non-verbal communication is part and parcel of the idea of communicative competence, especially concerning appropriateness of language use (Schiffrin 1994, 364). Also language socialisation studies have pointed out that when children learn to speak they learn more than the correct use of language in the form of grammatical sentences, they learn to appropriately use linguistic utterances, and this includes non-verbal means as well. Non-verbal aspects of communication is even more relevant in studies employing a community of practice perspective, as they are interested in all kinds of practices besides the strictly verbal ones. Even the more individual-based approach of cognitive linguistics occasionally grapples with the idea of other channels of expression than the usual vocal and verbal one, as we shall see in 2.4.4 on page 37.

There are several non-verbal sides of interaction: Very close to the verbal side are intonation and prosodic phenomena, which may carry as much, or more, meaning as the utterances by themselves. In addition, gestures, body positions and gaze directions should be included as important aspects of face-to-face interaction, in all cultural settings. Their impact on the interaction is readily seen if we consider appropriate vs. inappropriate demeanour in some situation, say, a child being taken to task for something. A penitent child being chided for a prank and a child defiantly denying the accusations will display very different non-verbal behaviour. Humans speak through their body configurations as well as through their words — sometimes this is actually the only thing said.

Bringing in the terminology of cognitive linguistics again, the category of communicative gestures clearly lends itself to being understood as a category of symbolic structures, using the vocalisation channel of gesture instead of, or

alongside, speech. Some gestures can be considered symbolic structures in their own right, such as the common Western way of signaling agreement or disagreement by nodding or shaking one's head. Other gestures add to the spoken words in different ways, by indicating objects and situational circumstances talked about, by finetuning verbal messages emotionally, by signalling 'more to come' even though the speaker has stopped speaking, and so on and on. Rhythm and timing of participants' movements and utterances carry much information on the speech management. In the timing of conversation, body movements and prosodic cues are used to emphasize certain points of relevance to the management of the interaction, so that the interactants know when to take the next turn because the appropriate pause has elapsed (Erickson 2004, 7).

Larger body configurations on the other hand, are structurally different from gestures such as nods or pointings. They last longer and frame longer stretches of interaction rather than particular bits and pieces. They signal the relevant relationship between the participants and towards the interaction taking place between them. Body configurations help to construct multiparty participation frameworks by bodily displaying orientation and creating joint attentional frames (Goodwin 2006, 107). Though different, they are not random or structureless, and sometimes quite specific forms may be required in certain communication situations. An example may be the requirement for participants to align with a focal point of the interaction, as students in a classroom who are supposed to look at the teacher.

There has been a tendency to regard non-verbal aspects of interaction as context, while the verbal part of interaction is the 'real thing'. This is partly due to a theoretical approach to interaction as something constituted first and foremost by language, as in Conversational Analysis theory. It is the *text* that creates its own structure, which defines the situation of its use and which creates its own context (Schiffrin 1994, 362-385). Conversational Analysis has with its close look at the text revealed such useful analytical tools as adjacency pairs, turn-taking structures and topic management mechanisms (see e.g. Sacks et al. (1974), ten Have (2007)). But they do not bring much of what is elsewhere considered necessary contextual knowledge into the analysis, only to the extent that the participants align themselves to it (Schiffrin 1994, 274).

Partly, however, the emphasis on verbal rather than non-verbal aspects may be due simply to the extensive use of auditive tape recording in all kinds of discourse analysis. While being a huge step forward in capturing details of the spoken interaction, it still leaves out many of the modes of communication which actually are available to the participants in a face-to-face interaction (Norris 2002). The problem of only using the verbal mode of interaction as a means to understand what is going on, becomes especially clear when the goal of the interaction is not only to talk, but to carry out some other activity. Talk is normally very much

part of this, but objects handled, gestures and nonverbal directing, use of other semiotic resources etc. may make an auditive transcript nearly incomprehensible, while a video may capture much more of the action (Goodwin 2000).<sup>6</sup>

Non-verbal practices are usually highly culture-specific: they grow out of the socio-cultural history of the interactants, both their particular histories as individuals and the longer historical lines they are connected to as belonging to particular groups. There is in my view every reason to see such practices as part of symbolic structures: they are other vocalisation channels belonging with what we called the phonological pole of a usage event. Langacker, speaking about what aspects of a usage event can become entrenched and emerge as linguistic units, vocalisation channels included, has the following opinion:

“To the extent that such units are conventional in a speech community, excluding them from a “language” or “linguistic system” is arbitrary.”

— Langacker (2001, 147)

Seeing all these non-verbal aspects of interaction as pertinent to meaning has direct impact on the methodology of the present study, as the other channels of vocalisation alongside the acoustic signal must be accounted for—this meant videorecording instead of just audiorecording.

### 2.4.4 Cognitive Linguistics and Bakhtin

Bakhtin embraced a rigid distinction between language and speech communication, assuming that these two are existentially different, as we saw in 2.2. He seems to build two parallel systems on these two categories, and it is by far speech communication in all its complexities that interests him most. However, cognitive linguistics does not share his opinion of language and speech communication as fundamentally different, rather the language ‘system’ is contingent on speech communication in important ways. Language as understood in cognitive linguistics is open to use Bakhtin’s insights on speech communication, and in certain ways it fulfills his own program, as we shall see.

#### Keeping language and speech communication together

Bakhtin had a clear program of keeping language and life together. Even in his insistence that language and speech communication have different units and must not be confused with one another, Bakhtin also wants to keep them together, because they basically treat the same linguistic phenomenon: “After all, language enters life through concrete utterances (which manifest language) and

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<sup>6</sup>Though not all, as anyone who has attempted to video-tape an event may agree to.

life enters language through concrete utterances as well,” (Bakhtin 1986, 63). If we take seriously Langacker’s (2001, 144) statement that “Most fundamentally, Cognitive Grammar makes contact with discourse through the basic claim that all linguistic units are abstracted from *usage events*, i.e., actual instances of language use,” we have solidly placed language structure within the purview of speech communication.

In the general view of language prevalent in cognitive linguistics, (see 1.1.1 on page 2) actual utterances are what shape the units of language, by frequency of use and the statistical abilities of human cognition. This narrows the gap between units of language and units of speech communication: they exist along a continuum, rather than in two separate worlds.

### **Units of language and units of communication**

What should count as units of language and communication respectively, is another, more thorny question, perhaps.

In his article *Discourse in Cognitive Grammar* (2001, 146), Langacker takes the position that *any* aspect of a usage event can emerge as a linguistic unit, if it is repeated enough times to become entrenched in individuals. The same applies to sequences of usage events in discourse. He goes to great lengths to show how even the finest distinction of intonation may be considered conventional patterning and thus a symbolic structure. Attentional framings to pieces of sentences, as when both clauses of an ‘if-then’-sequence is framed apart or together, impinge on the meaning of the whole sequence in certain predictable ways (Langacker 2001, 154-8). Different intonation patterns with their contingent meanings are in this case seen as part of the characterisation of the word ‘if’ (Langacker 2001, 160). Though Langacker does not apply these insights to any stretch of ‘real’ communication, he does show the possibilities inherent in certain patterns which then can be applied to excerpts of actual language use.

In Bakhtinian terms, this can be regarded as an exercise of language analysis, which does not elucidate speech communication. However, fine points of prosody and attentional framing typically must have quite well-defined use contexts to become relevant as meaning-bearing signals. In other words, one gets very close to actual utterances, meant to be intentional toward some other party in the conversation, and still it is possible to find schemas of recurrent commonalities. From this point of view as well, the gap between language units and speech units narrows.

Bakhtin wanted to keep language and communication together, and Cognitive linguistics can be said to do so, by its focus on language use and encyclopedic meaning. The difference between Langacker’s and Bakhtin’s approach still comes out in their different understanding of what discourse is used for. For Langacker

the goal of discourse seems to be building local consolidated conceptual structures in both speaker and hearer (preferably the same structure), while the addressivity and responsive understanding of Bakhtin's utterances of speech communication tend to get lost. They are looking for different things in discourse, as it were.

## 2.5 Discourse in cognitive linguistics

I have argued that the frameworks presented in 2.1 and 2.2 are compatible with cognitive linguistics, and that it is possible to use the latter also for analysing actual linguistic interaction. Below Langacker's model for how to engage with such an analysis is presented. The basic idea is to recognise recurrent commonalities of many usage events and thereby pin down schemas which can be presumed to capture entrenched conventional units for language users.

### 2.5.1 The Current Discourse Space and the viewing frame

Langacker introduces an elaboration of the idea of usage events in the notion of the *Current Discourse Space*, the CDS, illustrated in Fig. 2.1 on the next page. At each moment of unfolding of an actual discourse, there is a current discourse space, grounded in its participants (minimally Speaker and Hearer) and their whereabouts and circumstances, see Fig. 2.1. Through their communication they are coordinating their viewing of some item, which can be literally anything. Language in this view can be thought of as a coordination device for joint attention and joint action, based on the human ability to cooperate and to evolve conventions (Croft 2007).

The participants in a series of usage events continually update the Current Discourse Space as new items are brought to their joint attention through the unfolding of discourse, shown as a succession of frames on the timeline in the figure. In discourse, then, meaning is construed by the speaker and hearer severally as a succession of items profiled by linguistic expressions are defiling through the focus point of the viewing frame, constantly updating the discourse space.

The usage event takes place in an immediate context of speech, which should be interpreted broadly as the physical, mental, social and cultural circumstances. The ground is at the center of the context and contains crucially the interacting parties (S and H) and the fact that they are interacting in the coordinated viewing of some facet of the world (Langacker 2001, 145). Besides this context, the CDS includes a body of knowledge presumed to be more or less shared by the participants. Within this body of knowledge is the shared and reasonably accessible apprehension of the discourse itself: the participants' memory of

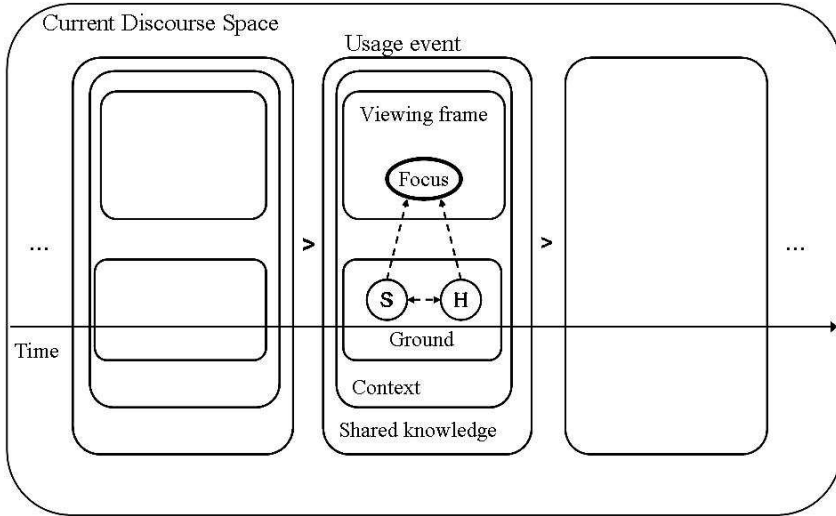


Figure 2.1: The Current Discourse Space (CDS), in a usage event (Langacker 2001).

previous discourse and their anticipation of what will come. Earlier and later discourse events can be drawn upon in the current frame, for example by expressions such as “As I just said...;” “As we shall see in a minute...;”, but also by a number of other devices.

A usage event is seen as bipolar, containing both vocalisation and conceptualisation by the participants. Each pole will have different channels within the viewing frame of the CDS, as shown in Fig. 2.2 on the facing page. *Speech management*, *Information structure* and *Objective situation* are grouped as conceptualisation channels, while *Segmental content*, *Intonation* and *Gesture* are grouped as vocalisation channels (Langacker 2001, 145-6). The channels are to some extent independent, but still coordinated in complex ways. Speech management pertains to turn taking, while Information structure includes emphasis, discourse topic and new vs. given status of information. The Objective situation channel on the conceptualisation side, and the Segmental content on the vocalisation side, are shown as comparatively more salient than the other channels on each side.

Not all the channels on either side must necessarily be used in all usage events: some expressions can use only gaze or gesture, and some conceptualisations will be confined to say, speech management and not have any content beyond that (Langacker’s example is ‘uh’ used as a floor holder, Langacker (2001, 148)).

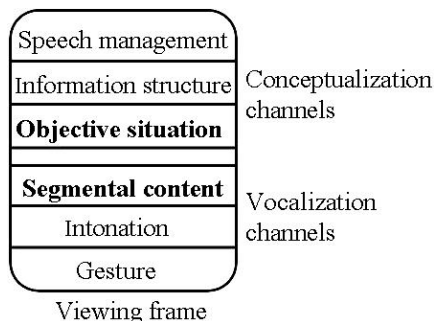


Figure 2.2: The phonological and conceptual channels of a symbolic structure in a usage event (Langacker 2001).

Within the CDS, certain linguistic elements serve to ground the communication by indexing referents in the space, such as hearer or speaker (pronouns, names, etc.), objects (definite and indefinite article, demonstratives, pointing, eye gaze direction, etc.) and space-time locations (adverbs of proximity, tense markers, gestures, etc.). The examples should not be considered as an exhaustive list, as it is fairly impossible to list all verbal and nonverbal devices for such indexing. New utterances constantly updates the CDS, building on what is already established (Langacker 2001, 171). As discourse activity proceeds, any aspect of the usage events have the possibility of emerging as a linguistic unit, if it is a recurrent commonality of many events. In Langacker's wording:

“Precisely the same cognitive process—the progressive entrenchment of recurrent commonalities—is therefore held responsible for the emergence of linguistic units of divers sorts, including those pertaining to pragmatics and discourse. To the extent that such units are conventional in a speech community, excluding them from a “language” or “linguistic system” is arbitrary.”

— Langacker (2001, 147).

One consequence of this view is that longer series of usage events can emerge as one linguistic unit by their recurrent use in the same series.

The CDS construct can clearly be useful in analysing actual language use, by allowing for a principled account of the whole language use situation and all aspects of vocalisation, including its movement through time.

### **Contextual configuration in linguistic anthropology**

A striking parallel to Langacker's notion of discourse space is found in Goodwin's work on human social action (Goodwin 2000). He uses the notion of a *contextual configuration* to express more or less the same idea as Langacker's continually updated Current Discourse Space. The contextual configuration encompasses many of the same elements as Langacker uses, though with different labels and a somewhat different goal in mind. Neither of the works refer to the other, and they do not share any references to other literature.

Goodwin wants to analyse the production and interpretation of *human social action*, understood as "an interactively organized process of public recognition of meaningful events reflexively linked to the ongoing production of these same events through the use of appropriate semiotic resources within an unfolding temporal horizon" (Goodwin 2000, 1492). To do so he analyses videorecorded interactions (girls playing hopscotch and archaeologists classifying color of dirt samples) in minute detail, attending to the different 'semiotic resources' or 'semiotic fields' employed by the interacting parties, such as gaze, gestures, body configurations, talk-in-interaction, and semiotic structures (hopscotch grid, colour chart) in the surround. To be part of the contextual configuration, objects in the surround must be made locally relevant by the interaction in some way or another, and the configuration will change as different things are focused. Both details of language use and the social, cultural, material and sequential structure of the environment of the interaction are part of how action is organised. In a later article (Goodwin 2006) Goodwin even use the notion of a joint attentional frame, but underlines that the public display of participation in the interaction also takes place through the use of the interactants visible bodies (Goodwin 2006, 100).

There is a seeming difference between analysing the emergence of linguistic units over many usage events, and analysing specific events to see how the different semiotic resources are used in organising the action. Nevertheless, the two research endeavours can be seen as different perspectives of the same thing. Semiotic resources or fields hardly come about just on the spur of the moment, they have histories of use. Langacker identifies many of the same fields as vocalisation channels of language use, and explicates how they as aspects of usage events can become entrenched as linguistic units. Both perspectives are valuable in an analysis of actual language use in interaction

### **2.5.2 Speech genres as linguistic units**

The preceding sections have dealt with the basic compatibility of the five different frameworks presented earlier in the chapter. In the present section, I will contend that a most fruitful intersection of the frameworks lies in the concept of *speech*



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*genres*, originally coined by Bakhtin (see 2.2.2 on page 26). The following sections will consider different aspects of speech genres, and of genres generally, in more detail.<sup>7</sup>

Bakhtin himself noted the parallel fashions in which forms of language and speech genres enter consciousness, in close connection with each other: “To learn to speak means to learn to construct utterances ... Speech genres organize our speech in almost the same way as grammatical (syntactical) forms do,” (Bakhtin 1986, 78). He connects speech genres with spheres of human activity; cognitivists have a somewhat corresponding idea in the concept of ‘cognitive domains’ which denotes “multiple realms of knowledge and experience,” (Langacker 1997, 235). Hence the typical forms which utterances are cast in would seem to arise in very much the same way as any linguistic unit, according to cognitive linguistics. The notion of speech genres can thus be compared to other linguistic units, that is, they are usage-based and schematic symbolic structures, conventionalised by progressive entrenchment in language users. As such they will be recognisable structures which can be used as heuristic tools to analyse discourse.

Speech genres, as other discourse patterns (Langacker 2001, 151), cannot exist without actual interaction between language users in a socio-cultural environment. Attentional framings and discourse expectations shape and are shaped by culturally transmitted ideas of what is worth attention, and how discourse should be structured. Conversational schemas and discourse patterns influence and are influenced by culture-specific activities and practices, interconnected with social institutions. The socio-cultural environment is partly constituted by language itself, while simultaneously creating and constraining the choices of the language users. Linguistic structure in its widest sense is sensitive to socio-cultural history (Gumperz & Levinson 1991, 614).

The type of discourse pattern which can be labelled *genre* or speech genre is perhaps especially open towards the socio-cultural environment, because it is partly defined by the *structure of the context* (I will return to this concept in 2.5.3 on page 45). Tellingly, genre is a relevant category within all the community-based frameworks presented earlier.

The following section will further use the schema concept of cognitive linguistics to discuss the concept of genre as found in the theories of language socialisation and communities of practice. Here genres are usually seen as part of the repertoire of communication found in the communities under study.

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<sup>7</sup>There is not necessarily a big difference in these two terms as Bakhtin uses them, but few writers but him use ‘speech genre’ at all, they employ the ‘genres’ instead.

### **Genres as discourse schemas**

In keeping with the language view developed in 1.1.1 on page 2, I do not consider speech genres, or genres generally, as predefined, universal categories, but as emerging from language use, just as any other linguistic unit or rule. All units are seen as schematic and arising from an *entrenchment of commonalities*. Genres can here be labelled *discourse schemas* and be defined as conventional symbolic structures with certain forms on the phonological side and corresponding conceptualisations on the semantic side. Genres are therefore also subject to change in the same way. As new texts build on the patterns of previous texts in usage events, genres will be changed by the weight of innovations large and small. This point of view coincides with the practice-and-habitus-based framework used by some genre analysts; according to Hanks (1987, 681), genres are here seen as a set of prototypical elements, never fixed in a unitary structure with objective rules.

Accordingly, while formal features are a part of most definitions of genre, they should not be seen as the only defining criteria of a genre. Functional criteria are also often cited in genre definitions, so that certain types of texts are tied to certain occasions, like funeral laments or wedding speeches. Both form and function become too narrow as criteria for a classification of texts, however, when we consider how genres can be employed outside their typical situations and how formal features can be mixed and reused in new contexts ((Briggs & Bauman 1992). Form in the sense of linguistic structures, and function in the sense of type of speech event are both subject to social evaluation processes in the composition and the reception of generic texts, when such texts are performed and objectified as verbal art (Muana 1998, 44). Discourse will at any time be invested with some degree of value, in a process that involves both those producing it and those receiving it. Genres therefore are not to be seen as neatly rounded entities with a unitary structure, but as “schematic and incomplete resources on which speakers necessarily improvise in practice.” Hanks (1987, 681).

### **Genres and intertextuality**

When texts are produced, they have intertextual properties, that is, they relate to other texts by genre, on a number of levels. They are not necessarily just manifestations of some common genre, reproducing typical formal features in a typical situation of use. A text generically linked to other texts can just as well turn the genre on its head in an ironic use of the formal features, or it can bring unexpected genres into a situation and thereby construct a new understanding of what goes on. Genres are thus not only ways of ordering discourse, by fulfilling certain expectations of how a particular text should start, end and otherwise be constructed, they are also disorganising principles, showing how texts fail to

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meet expectations or are just chaotic and fragmentaric as compared to other texts (Briggs & Bauman 1992, 149).

A more useful view of genres thus emerges when we take them to be defined

“as the historically specific conventions and ideals according to which authors compose discourse and audiences receive it. In this view, genres consist of orienting frameworks, interpretive procedures, and sets of expectations that are not part of discourse structure, but of the ways actors relate to and use language.”

— Hanks (1987, 670)

Using terms from cognitive linguistics, we may say that Hank’s “orienting frameworks, interpretive procedures and sets of expectations” are *schematic conventionalised conceptualisations of forms manifest in texts* produced and received by social actors. They are hence always situated, grounded in the time and space of their usage events, part of the practice of the people using them. In this way, genres always underdetermine the texts and the meanings produced by the participants in a usage event, but they still have an effect of how discourse is produced and received. When a certain, say, introductory formula is used, the receivers will start to form expectations of the following text, which then may be fulfilled or not. If the expectations are fulfilled, the following text will be understood within a certain frame, if not, it will bring in another frame, or maybe fail as communication. However, in both cases the original orientation created by the introduction will resonate in the reception and production of the text.

I do not follow Hanks when he puts genres outside discourse structure to be “ways actors relate to and use language”. In my view, genres keep some material structure in the form of linguistic expression and conceptualisation, however schematic and vague, recurrent across many usage events. It is perhaps a delicate business to tease this schematic form-and-content structure apart from Hanks’ notion of ‘ways of relating’, but I see in principle genres as linguistic units, symbolic structures with a phonological and a semantic pole. They do, however, create discourse expectations when used: an introductory formula often used to insert a certain kind of speech will create an expectation of this item to follow.

### 2.5.3 Speech genres as interactional tools

The view of genres as orientating frameworks and interpretive procedures amounts to see them as important interactional tools. As we noted in 2.2, a literary critic such as Bakhtin saw the existence of genres in all kinds of discourse. The banal and endlessly repeated things people say to each other, at home, at work, on the marketplace, in the classroom, spring out of a tacit knowledge of what

and how things should be said in different spheres of communication. The term ‘speech genres’ as coined by Bakhtin opens up the range of genres to the typical forms of utterances in all kinds of interaction.

This stands in a certain contrast to the common use of ‘genre’ as a label for categories of texts. Genre as taxonomic principle has typically been evoked to deal only with so-called ‘literary’ texts. Even though ‘literary’ is not necessarily taken to be a category pertaining only to written texts, so it is at least thought to describe texts that have been somewhat carefully prepared with an audience in mind, such as many folklore texts meant to be performed (tales, proverbs, legends, jokes). Where literary studies look for the expressive originality in a text as art, folklore studies of traditional genres often bring the performance aspect forward. Both research traditions thus signal that the text to some degree is lifted out of the everyday routines and onto a stage set off from direct interactional activity. However, there is every reason to think that genres exist just as much in everyday discourse, as they are symbolic structures of language, arising as discourse schemas out of usage events.

Speech genres, then, are conventional forms and frameworks reaching into all kinds of interaction, and shaping texts of all kinds, from everyday greetings and conversation to different folklore genres and to the most lofty work of art.

To further differentiate genres, I shall use the concept of *structure of the context*, taken from an earlier treatment of folklore genres (Ben-Amos 1976). It was originally put forward in the midst of an important debate on the status of folklore performance as discourse, and on issues of ethnic genres vs. universal analytical categories (Muana 1998, 49). The concept was defined by Abrahams (1976, 198) as “the level of structure where the patterns of relationships between the participants in the aesthetic transaction is considered.”<sup>8</sup> In his view, while situational patterns can be expressed by labeling genres from their occasions of use (*Christmas* carols, *party* games), or from their locations of use (*bedside* stories, *stage* plays), the most important focus of the structure of context is on the *performer-audience relation*.

Performer-audience relations range from a total interpersonal involvement to a total removal of performer from audience, through the four stages of *conversational genres*, *play genres*, *fictive genres* and *static genres*. The last category stretches the genre concept considerably: it concerns objects of folk art such as folk sculpture and folk design, where the “performer” is not any longer present with his work and so no longer directly interacts with his audience.<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>8</sup>Abrahams notes in addition to the structure of the context two other levels of structure in folklore forms: the material structure, such as verse or prose, music etc., and the dramatic structure, in genres employing conflict and its resolution between the characters depicted (Abrahams 1976, 198).

<sup>9</sup>This idea seems to foreshadow the notion of ‘frozen actions’ used in Mediated Discourse

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other categories, however, pertain to diverse verbal genres which are ordered along the continuum from strong interpersonal involvement to an increasingly larger ‘psychic distance’ between the performer and audience, see Fig. 2.3 on the following page.

Abrahams (1976) explicitly frames his work as concerning different forms of folklore. He was in the context of folklore studies looking for how “traditional items of knowledge that arise in recurring performances” are used in order to affect or move the audience to future action (Abrahams 1976, 195). The present study is of course concerned with a broader range of data than only folklore or traditional genres, for example in the study of classroom discourse. However, the insights of Abrahams’ classification of genres according to the structure of the context can be brought to bear on more than strictly traditional material. In the view of cognitive linguistics, traditional items cast in traditional genres will not have a different status from newer items as far as both kinds are linguistic units and symbolic structures. Both will be regarded as conventionalised schematic symbolic structures, albeit with a much differing length of use history.

A closer look at the list of conversational and other genres in Fig. 2.3 on the next page also shows that many of the genres classified here as folklore are quite likely to be found in all kinds of spoken interaction without any particular notion of tradition attached. Especially the genres cited as *Conversational 1* and defined as “the smallest elements of patterned expression common to a group” (Abrahams 1976, 201), fall right into the shared repertoire of communication typically developed in a community of practice, as noted on p. 20. Abrahams specifically notes that special in-group vocabularies serve to define the membership in the group. The second conversational group, which includes genres with formal conventions of the discourse of address, appeal and assault, also has some genres with a wider distribution than strictly folklore. Genres of greetings, of asking for things and favours, and for insulting or teasing others come readily to mind as both being conventionally shaped and simultaneously in the thick of everyday interaction. Abrahams’ main point is to show that these discourse patterns do not belong on any kind of stage, however informal. They have their setting right in the direct involvement with other people.

The group of play genres already shows a different pattern by introducing certain roles: the riddler vs. the riddlee, the joke teller vs. his or her audience, the roles of chaser and chasee in a game of tag. The players put on a temporary mask and a stylised play world is created (Abrahams 1976, 202). This involves the use of *secondary genres* as defined by Bakhtin: it is language use cast in typical forms known from everyday life, but used in the fictive reality of playing.

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Analysis of “higher-level actions, which are entailed in material objects.” (Norris & Jones 2005, 17).

## 2. UNDERSTANDING LINGUISTIC INTERACTION

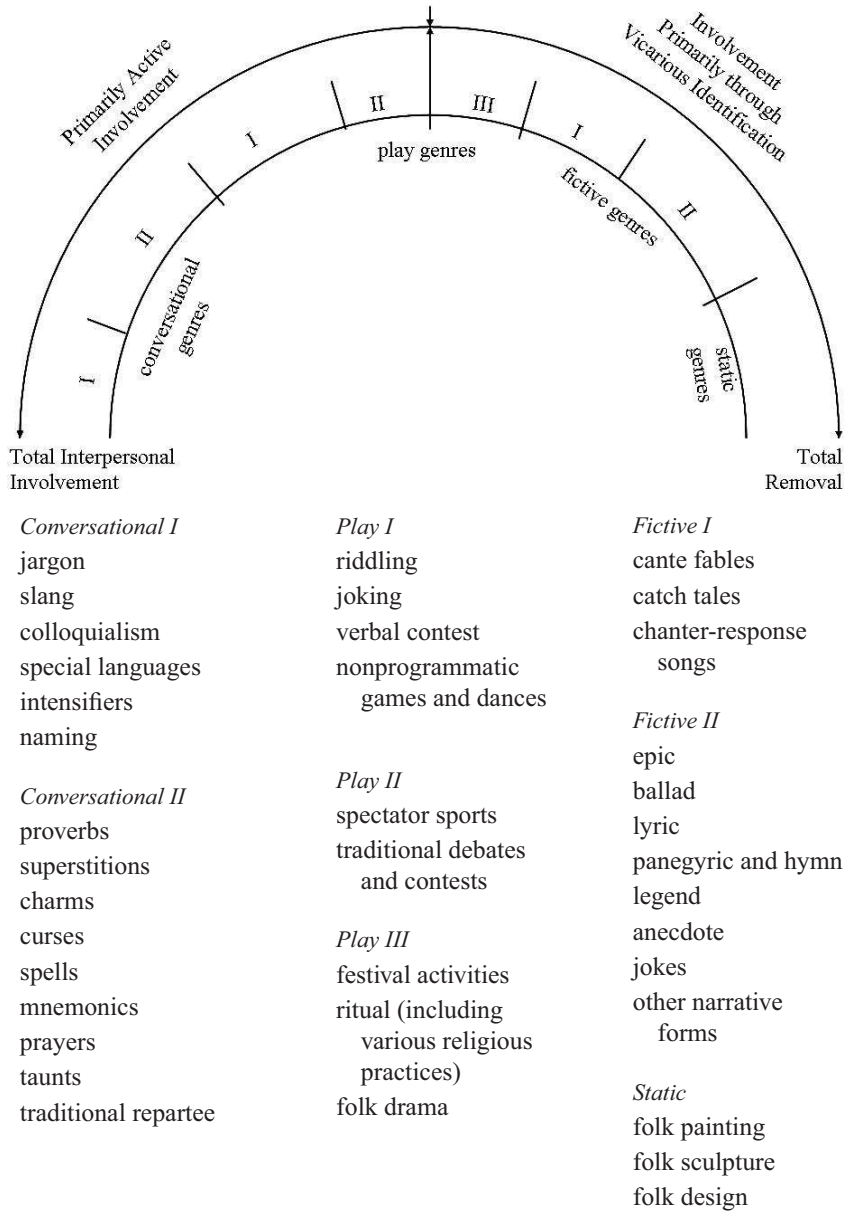


Figure 2.3: Range of level of interaction between performer and audience

In assuming roles, the players are in principle removed from the action of the real world, see 2.2.2 on page 26. In the play world they are often licensed to say and do things not normally allowed (Abrahams 1976, 203); this is part of the attraction of play. As far as games are part of the heritage of a cultural community, stylised in the usage of generations of children, they will often express deepset ideologies important to the members of the community.

Again the different subgroups of genres in the general category of play genres show steadily less interaction and interpersonal involvement. In Play I, the players still play mostly for their own entertainment, not to be watched by others. The genres which demand a defined audience watching the performance of the players, such as all kinds of spectator sports from football to sumo wrestling, are put in Play II. Play III has festival activities and rituals as important genres. Whereas Play I and II still are characterised primarily by active involvement of the participants, the genres of Play III together with the fictive genres have a larger psychological distance between the players and the roles they are playing out. There is clearly a performance of roles going on, and the audience is involved primarily through vicarious identification with the roles rather than through active and direct involvement.

The fictive genres, now well over into the more removed segment of the range, are again divided into two groups. In Fictive I there is still an active involvement of the audience in so far as they can be drawn into the performance, for example by singing a refrain to a chanter's verses. In Fictive II genres, the performance is completely monologic. The group includes most of the narrative forms such as ballads, folktales and anecdotes.

### 2.5.4 A cognitive linguist's notion of genres

In the preceding sections I have argued that genres or speech genres are emerging linguistic units, in the form of local conventional discourse schemas in regularly interacting aggregates of people. The schemas have some material structure in the form of linguistic expression and conceptualisation ("formal criteria"). They may be tied to particular occasions or locations of use ("functional criteria"). Finally they can be differentiated by the nature of the performer-audience relationship of the use situation ("the structure of context"). As conventional schemas they create discourse expectations and impinge on the unfolding of interaction in usage events. They are tools used by the participants to shape ongoing interaction. However, as emergent and learned schemas, they will not be identical for all the participants.

I have used both genres and speech genres in the preceding sections, but will henceforward primarily use *speech genres* as term. Without excluding other kinds of genres, the term speech genres signals discourse schemas that are much closer

to everyday language use and the way ordinary and banal utterances can have typical forms, even down to the use of a specific word with a certain typical discourse meaning.

### **2.6 A new course for cognitive linguistics**

One of the aims of the present work is to apply the cognitive linguistics paradigm to a field where it has been relatively speaking rarely used: that of language use in actual social interaction. This is not an idea totally new to cognitive linguistics, however. Some recent studies have in fact employed a cognitive linguistics approach integrated with different sociolinguistic frameworks to study interaction, along the lines proposed by the present work. The work I base much of my analytical framework on in the present study, Langacker (2001), can be seen as a part of this movement, though Langacker stays within the traditional introspective research tradition of cognitive linguistics. Another well-known cognitive linguist who has taken an interest in a more social-interactional perspective on language is William Croft, particularly in his 2007 article. In the next two sections I will first present studies in a general movement to accommodate discourse analysis by in the cognitive linguistics' camp in 2.6.1. Then I will consider Croft's (2007) article in 2.6.2 on page 52.

#### **2.6.1 Empirical methods in CL work**

Since 2003 three workshops on empirical methods of cognitive linguistics have been held. The first workshop of 'Empirical Methods in Cognitive Linguistics' workshop<sup>10</sup> resulted in a collection of papers on methods in cognitive linguistics (Gonzalez-Marquez, Mittelberg, Coulson & Spivey 2006). The papers bring up many of the themes which I deal with in this chapter, and generally broaden the perspective of cognitive linguistics by drawing upon other research traditions such as experimental psycholinguistics and neural approaches to language, besides corpus and discourse analysis.

The examples of corpus and discourse analysis found in the collection represent a much needed turn to the analysis of actual language use and the exploitation of other important frameworks for the study of language. Still, many of the studies do not, to my mind, exploit fully the potential of applying a cognitive linguistics view of language to the analysis of language in use.

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<sup>10</sup>The workshop was held at Cornell University, New York, in May 2003.



### **Using multiple approaches in CL work**

Space does not permit a full review of all the studies cited in Gonzalez-Marquez, Mittelberg, Coulson & Spivey (2006), so I will address directly only the contribution of Waugh, Fonseca-Greber, Vickers & Eröz (2006) to the collection. It is chosen for closer examination because it in some ways parallels the present study: it highlights the use of multiple ways of working on culturally contextualised language use, and discusses the study of classroom interactions. An appraisal of the use of cognitive linguistics in the whole article is given after a short presentation of the main content.

The article takes a methodological point of view and specifically treats ways to use corpora of actual language use, and to integrate many different kinds of contextual knowledge to better understand linguistic phenomena. The article reviews three previous research projects of discourse analysis, carried out within a general cognitive linguistics paradigm. One study concerned the discrepancy between pronouns in standard written French and their actual use in spoken French. Waugh and Fonseca-Greber made a corpus of transcribed, audio-taped, spontaneous, naturally-occurring face-to-face everyday conversations, taken from different French-speaking communities. Alongside the recordings, they collected social and cultural/ethnographic information on the recorded speakers and identified the type of speech event involved. They found interesting correlations of pronoun usage to issues of the establishment of solidarity or distance between speaker and addressee, positive and negative face, indexical of linguistic and cultural identity and of personal ideology. Vicker's study concerned work on conversational interactions between native and nonnative speakers (Waugh et al. 2006, 134–139). It also employed a corpus of recorded conversations to find sequences of accommodation interaction in student teamwork. The socio-cultural context was brought into the analysis in several ways, such as participant observation. Eröz's study looked at interactional patterns in classroom behaviour and correlations in cultural background. Again the use of actual language recordings is seen as the most important way to find salient patterns, but ethnographic data is extensively used as well.

The authors emphasise the need for using actual interactional data together with socio-cultural information to carry out their research projects. However, despite their alignment with the cognitive linguistics paradigm, Culturally Contextualised Conversation Analysis (Moerman 1988) is the main analytical framework of the studies. At the micro level they mostly use analytic methods from Conversation analysis (CA), interactional linguistics and corpus linguistics.

### Use of cognitive theory in the cited studies

The clearest relation to cognitive linguistics in the reported studies lies in the basic idea of cognition as integrated with discourse and social and cultural activities. These are “mutually implicating, and none is understandable without serious consideration of their independent integration.” (Waugh et al. 2006, 144). Hence, the study of cognition must be correlated with the study of discourse, social and cultural structures and the functional foundation of language. According to these researchers, it is only from the perspective of the nature of human interaction through language in its social and cultural setting that conclusions about cognition can be drawn. Discourse is viewed as a process embedded in a complex ecological system, and constantly shapes and is shaped by this ecological setting. The ecological setting then includes “all those factors that shape and are shaped by human cognition,” hence also language (Waugh et al. 2006, 120).

While I very much agree with the authors’ use of cognitive linguistics as a basic approach to understanding interaction, I would like to point out that none of the reported studies try to develop new analytical constructs to deal with interaction within a cognitive linguistics framework, with the possible exception of Waugh and Fonseca-Greber. They do give an important contribution in making other cognitive linguists aware of the rich material of natural language use corpora, and of other frameworks to work on it, but the studies do not bring back any new insights from these other research tradition into cognitive linguistics, or vice versa.<sup>11</sup>

The notion of *emergent schemas* as used in cognitive linguistics is a powerful way of handling and systematising similarities on any level of language use, without reverting to nailing down rules. Language use never fully conforms to the supposed rules, anyway, and according to cognitive linguistics, this is because what we easily think of as rules really are emergent structures with some statistics on their side (see 1.1.1 on page 2). This is a crucial insight when dealing with language in actual use, because it allows us to look for the emergent structures, the recurrent traits on their way to forming schemas, and not get frustrated in the face of endlessly fragmented ‘rules.’

### 2.6.2 A social cognitive linguistics

Of quite direct interest to the present study is Croft’s (2007) paper. In the article he proposes a reformulation of the CL principles along less individualistic lines, and he explicitly brings the speech community into the definition of a linguistic item.

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<sup>11</sup>The studies may of course contain more theoretical insights than reported in the article with its focus on methodology.

## 2.6. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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The article presents some of the basic principles of cognitive linguistics and then argues for expanding each of them with an additional social perspective. A comparison of the old and new lists of basic principles shows how he consistently adds a social-interactive element in each case. The ‘old’ list is presented first. It is in many ways a fairly standard listing of views basic to the cognitive linguistics paradigm, especially as opposed to the generativist paradigm (Croft 2007, 1–2). I may note that points 1 and 2 underlie the whole presentation of cognitive linguistics in 2.3, while points 3 and 4 are directly expressed as basic tenets of cognitive linguistics in 2.3.1 on page 30 of the present work.

1. Grammatical structures and processes in the mind are instances of general cognitive abilities.
2. Grammar is symbolic and meaning is an essential part of grammar.
3. Meaning is encyclopedic.
4. Meaning involves construal (conceptualisation)

Croft’s revised list of basics is different (Croft 2007, 18), though, and brings in the idea of *human sociality* as an important aspect of language. Below, the new element in each revised principle is highlighted.

1. Grammatical structures and processes in the mind are instances of general *social cognitive abilities as well as* individual cognitive abilities.
2. Grammar consists of a *semiotic triangle of* the form, the meaning *and the community in which the meaning is conventional*.
3. Meaning is *shared as well as* encyclopedic.
4. Meaning involves construal (conceptualisation) *for the purpose of communication*.

In the discussion leading to these changes (Croft 2007, 3–18), Croft basically makes recourse to the fact that “language is a central feature of human social interaction” (Croft 2007, 3), and therefore language cannot fully be understood outside of that fact. The cognitive and social dimensions of language must be brought together in a new way, and cognitive linguistics must embed itself in a more general social-interactive model of language, drawing on the social dimensions of language. Furthermore, he identifies as important social cognitive abilities *joint action, coordination and convention*. Defining language simply as ‘joint action’ (not language use as would be expected), he claims that conventions are the most central and distinctive characteristic of human linguistic behaviour

(Croft 2007, 8). At the same time, linguistic conventions of form-meaning pairs should be considered semiotic triangles, as noted in point 2 above. The convention must have a third leg, namely the community in which the meaning is conventional. This leads Croft to a consideration of communities and to the conclusion that a language such as English is a heterogeneous entity comprising many different communal lexicons all related to the multiple speech communities of a society. The communities overlap, so people will have a repertoire of codes to use in different communities. This is of course a fairly standard sociolinguistic approach to language, as he remarks himself.

From the notion of meaning as related to a community, he develops a concept of meaning as shared as well as encyclopedic. We manage to successfully communicate with each other through our use of common ground, that is the shared knowledge, beliefs and attitudes about our world. We cannot read each other's minds, but as members of common communities we can infer shared knowledge. But communication needs a coordination device, and this Croft identifies as convention. "The ability to evolve conventions for communication is a social cognitive ability essential for language" (Croft 2007, 8). Joint attention is cited as another coordination device in joint actions.

### **Use of cognitive and sociolinguistic theory**

For all the important topics brought up by Croft's paper, there are some further issues to be considered. The first concerns his insistence on the necessity of conventions and common ground to establish (successful) communication. While there certainly is some degree of conventional sign use and shared common ground in most interactions, it is not quite precise to take this as the only way of establishing a shared meaning. We simply do not relate to each other's meanings only by way of established conventions and 'common ground'. Instead we behave as if we *can* read each other's minds, that is, we react to the perceived intentions of our interlocutors, as noted already by Grice (1957), see also Levinson (2006, 45). Correspondingly, we make our own intentions public by speaking, by posturing our bodies, by gaze directions and gestures. Doing so, we may expect them to be read by others recognising our intentions.

Croft seeks to extend 'encyclopedic' meaning to 'shared' meaning. While 'shared meaning' at a basic level is an uncontroversial idea, it undermines the whole point of talking about encyclopedic meaning. This basic notion of cognitive linguistics (Langacker 1987, 154–66) takes meaning to be based on all the former usage events of some form-meaning pair that its present user ever has had access to. Words can certainly enter a communal lexicon, in the sense of being used with a conventional meaning by the members of some community. Still, items in a communal lexicon are learned in context, from use, and there is no reason

## 2.6. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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whatsoever that everybody in the community in question should have exactly the same use history (barring maybe the case of siamese twins). This means that meanings will always be a little, or much, different in different language users, as each have different experiences.

Furthermore, the conceptualised meanings arising from the use of symbols in two or more interlocutors may be different, sometimes very different, but that is not reason enough to say that communication has not been successful or that joint action has not been achieved. A shared history and earlier interaction will of course ease communication (we may use fewer and less overt signs to convey the same intentions), but it is actually not a prerequisite to obtain some understanding.

There is a further notion of meaning which easily disappears in Croft's exposition of a social cognitive linguistics. As interlocutors use their utterances of conventional, but not totally shared meanings, they also *negotiate* meaning. They take cues of how their interlocutor has understood their meaning from what she says next, and they may ask for the other's intentions or they clarify their own points of view. Frequently people change their conceptualisations of the meanings as the conversation goes along. The meaning was not what you took it to be after all, and actually not what I thought when I said it, either.

A further point to be noted is Croft's use of the community of practice concept (Wenger 1998). After accepting as its central premise that shared expertise emerges from shared practice, he tries to reconcile this notion with Clark's notion of shared expertise which is much wider (Clark 1996), and ends up with a harmonisation of the two views, seemingly to keep together the idea that people may speak the same language because expertise can be shared indirectly as part of a shared historical process. To do this, he more or less dismantles the central ideas of a community of practice, redefining joint action, joint enterprise and mutual engagement. It is not clear to me why this is necessary to arrive at an understanding of language as a social phenomenon.

The last point I shall mention here is the case study offered at the end of the article, of alternative verbalisations of experience. Croft uses the data from the Pear Stories Project (Chafe (1980), cited in Croft (2007)) to examine the semantics of verbalisation. He uses the fact that different persons show different construals of a scene by using different verbs to show that there is a "fundamental indeterminacy of construal in conversation, although common ground means that communication is possible and often successful" (Croft 2007, 25). That common ground he seeks to find in the historical development of English as an offshot of Indo-European.

Croft's article is in many ways an important contribution to the development of cognitive linguistics in a more socially oriented direction. On the other hand, his use of sociolinguistic theories is not quite convincing, and there are certainly other ways of investigating the Pear Stories from an interactional point of view, as

he actually claim to do (Croft 2007, 21).

## 2.7 Studies of teaching and learning in Cameroon

Hitherto I have reviewed and commented upon only the more general linguistic literature, with no relation to actual questions of teaching and learning in Cameroon. However, there exists some previous research on Cameroonian schooling and aspects of language teaching, of diverse theoretical orientations, which is of interest to the present work.

**Playing Fulfulde language games** A highly original study of traditional ways of teaching and learning is found in Father Dominique Noye's doctoral dissertation (Noye 1971). After presenting the complex grammatical system of the conservative form of Fulfulde used in the Diamaré province, he shows how the complicated morphological alternances of nouns and verbs, and other grammatical fine-points of Fulfulde are taught to children without any help from a formal school system. In its place there are numerous tales, riddles, verbal games and other special forms of language which are geared to train the language users in morphology and everyday linguistic analysis. He points out that "this teaching is not at all systematical and is never presented as teaching. It is used very freely, at the whim of the user, and in a mode of amusement" (Noye 1971, 49).<sup>12</sup> He is able to identify a number of traditional items which have such a language teaching value:

1. Childrens' argots, practice of linguistic analysis (parsing)
2. Riddles, practice of the concord of nominal classes
3. Trick phrases and verbal games, practice of articulation and nominal classes,
4. Inventories and litanies, practice of nominal classes
5. Adjectival variations in tales, class concord practice
6. Nominal class identity becoming clan communities

A final type is found in the teaching of vocabulary in tale performances. The teller will stop to make a note on some word, its translation from another language or

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<sup>12</sup>French original: "Mais cet enseignement n'a rien de systématique et n'est jamais présenté comme tel. Il est utilisé très librement, à la fantaisie de chacun, et par mode d'amusement."

## 2.7. STUDIES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CAMEROON

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a general explanation. In certain types of tales, the point of the tale itself is to explicate some important concept.

Noye does not refer to any particular framework beyond African linguistics and folklore studies, including some studies on argots in West-Africa and elsewhere, but he argues convincingly that the items that he cites actually do function as grammatical rehearsal mechanisms and thus aid language learning. One example is riddles where the riddlee must guess the name of something, an animal, an object, a person. The riddle often contains an adjective or participial form, and pronouns, all of which concord with the noun to be found. This is of course helpful to solve the riddle, but thereby the riddle also functions as an exercise of nominal class concord. The rich material he presents for each category listed above cannot be extensively discussed here, but there is an obvious relevance for learning Fulfulde in the active use of grammatical intricacies in these pastimes. We may note also that writing just twenty years later, Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek (1994) already deplore the loss of these games in the urban milieu, in their report from schooling in Maroua.

In the present study I work with somewhat similar materials of oral literature, in the form of tales, riddles and children's games. While I cannot point to the existence of specifically grammar teaching items in my data, I recognise the general structure of instructing children in a "mode of amusement," without advertising that teaching is going on in any way. These items of language use are interesting objects of study for cognitive linguistics.

**Schooling in Maroua** The next study to be cited here is substantially newer than Noye's work. Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek (1994) give in their book a detailed picture of many aspects of schooling in Cameroon, by examining the school situation in Maroua, the largest city of the province of the Extreme North. They did their main field work in 1992-1993 (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 7), when the school sector in Cameroon still was in the middle of a severe crisis of funding and personel, see 6.1.5. The study contains a wealth of sociolinguistic and ethnographic material and covers a surprising amount of data, much of it valuable statistical facts of the situation there.

The thrust of the study is to propose solutions to the severity of the situation in the educational sector in the province of the Extreme North, where school results were steadily declining and the number of drop-outs rising. The authors investigate a number of factors such as demography, linguistic and religious adherence, children's other occupations, what they would eat for breakfast and lunch, the Qur'anic schools and the number and quality of the schools and the teachers.

They identify the extensive redoing of grades as a main culprit for too large

classes, noting that this is choking the school system. The reasons why so many students have to redo classes are also identified: the treatment in class is harsh, they have to leave their home milieu to band up with hundreds of unknown children, they often come to school without breakfast and sufficient food for the day, and they do not understand French.

In an interesting section (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 150–55), the authors compare the relative success of children from different ethnic groups in completing primary school in the prescribed time of six years. There is no question that the children from families coming from the South of Cameroon do best, as they often know quite a bit of French. Speakers of other local languages such as Giziga, Mundang, Tupuri, Massa and Kanuri, and Fulfulde as the regional *lingua franca*, are shown to have differing results in school, relating to their knowledge of French.

The main solution proposed by the authors to address the many issues of schooling in Maroua is to use Fulfulde as the medium of instruction: it will make it much easier for the children to actually get through primary school, thus easing also the twin problems of redoing grades and overfull classes (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 263–87).

In the present study I have used many of their findings on the redoing syndrome, but with a different twist. Where Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek (1994) only see the problematic sides of having many redoers in every class, I am able to show how this facilitates the establishment of communities of practice in the classes. The newcomers can benefit from knowledgeable oldtimers to learn how to ‘do school’, and the teachers exploit the situation to carry out their particular brand of pedagogical ideology.

**Guided repetition in public and Qur’anic schools** The last study to be mentioned here is Leslie Moore’s work on rote learning in Qur’anic and public schools, also in Maroua. Moore uses the language socialisation paradigm to describe interaction in the two types of school, and also looks at the use of tales in traditional home-based instruction (Moore 2004, Moore 2006). She identifies a common model of teaching and learning that she calls *Guided Repetition* in both types of schooling. The goal in both settings is the development of competence in a second language, and both employ rote learning to achieve this goal. Through the use of a language socialisation theoretical framework, she is able to link the interactional patterns of both school traditions with the language competence and ways of being that the children are expected or hoped to develop through them. While the goals and the basic model are similar, the socialisation process itself is accomplished in culturally distinct ways in the two settings. She focuses on language learning in both contexts, and did not for instance observe the teaching



## 2.8. CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRESENT STUDY

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of other subjects such as mathematics or science in the public schools.

Moore's analysis is quite penetrating on questions of teacher authority, learning motivation, text treatment and pacing of the learning process, but she is less interested in the typical ways of talking in teaching and learning, especially outside language teaching, though her dissertation (Moore 2004) has more transcribed language material than the shorter article (Moore 2006). Her insights into the structure of lessons have been highly useful in the present work, see 8.1.1 on page 290.

### **Lack of studies**

There are all in all comparatively few studies of schooling in the Cameroonian context, and even fewer focus on the use of language in school, with the exception of those who treat language in school from the medium of instruction point of view (Gfeller 1995, Tadadjeu, Sadembouo & Mba 2004). Very few, if any, treat schooling in the province of Adamoua from a language use perspective.

Studies addressing the use of oral literature in teaching children in Cameroon also seem to be rare; Nsamenang & Lamb (1994) and Argenti (2001) are the examples I have been able to find beyond Noye (1971) noted above. Some descriptions may also surface in general anthropological descriptions of ethnic groups. Those who do speak of children's games in a learning context from Cameroon, tend to do so from an adult point of view, seeing the games only as a way of socialising children, as done in Nsamenang & Lamb (1994). However, the function of games and other plays as living tradition, recreated each time they are performed, is explored in Argenti's (2001) very interesting study of how children act out their old games of masking with quite new themes of political violence.

## **2.8 Contribution of the present study**

In the previous sections of the chapter, I have given an overview of the main theoretical frameworks informing the present study, and of some previous research more directly relevant for my study. I have noted the need to do more work on actual language use within the cognitive linguistics paradigm, and especially in the field of linguistic interaction. At the same time other frameworks already heavily involved with the analysis of social interaction, such as community of practice theory, can benefit from the view of language found in cognitive linguistics, without losing their 'community' approach to discourse.

The ethnography of speaking has a broad approach to language, and has during the years produced much work of great interest, not the least within the field of language in education. Still my research questions focusing on the

emergent character of linguistic structures needs another framework than the idea of communicative competence; it can too easily translate into a view of language with predefined and stable structures.

The language socialisation framework comes the closest to a theory of language as a cognitive and social resource in interaction. However, scholars working in this have concentrated mostly on the language learning processes of early childhood, and have showed less interest in older children and adults, though there has been a branching out of studies in this direction in recent years (Garrett & Baquedano López 2002).

Of the three ‘social’ approaches I have considered here, the community of practice theory is by far the theory with the least interest in the question of the locus and nature of language. As a general theory of learning, rather than of language, it tends to look at language as a presupposed instrument of the community, though specific linguistic features may enter the shared repertoire of communication of a particular community. Other sociolinguists, (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992, Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999) have, however, used the perspective with very interesting results.

Though there is a movement within cognitive linguistics to do more discourse analysis on actual language use data, the contribution of the present study is to take the integration with other theoretical frameworks further and to propose a new category of analysis for this kind of research. To the best of my knowledge, the Bakhtinian notion of speech genres has not been used in any of the studies I have discussed, though some draw on his ideas of ‘dialogue’ and ‘voices’. In the minutely transcribed interactions analysed in the following chapters of this dissertation, I look for recurrences of forms, for repetitions, which would be likely to imprint a schema in its users. Using Bakhtin’s terminology, I call these schemas *speech genres* to mark them as both pertaining to language and to the more context-related notion of genres. My approach in using speech genres as a tool for analysing interaction of teaching and learning, is, therefore, a new contribution to research. Speech genres are seen as salient entities arising from many usage event in interaction, creating orientational frameworks that interlocutors use as an interactional tool.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

The methodology of the present study grows out of a functionalist approach to discourse, seeing discourse as *language in use*. It is directly based on a cognitive linguistics view of language, discussed in 1.1.1 on page 2, where language is understood to have emergent linguistic structures immanent in actual linguistic utterances. This view prefers the use of data from actual language usage to describe linguistic structure, because this is where such structures arise and are immanent in usage events. Language use again is always *situated* in communities of interacting individuals. Communities, of any size, are seedbeds for the emergence of linguistic structures, each community shaping its own repertoire from the material coming out of the past, from earlier groups of interacting individuals. Individuals reproduce these structures, in this way making them accessible for the analyst as well as for the participants interacting in discourse. Both using actual language data and the need to view these data in the light of a sociocultural context, has direct implications for the methodology of the study.

As noted in 2.6, Cognitive Linguistics have recently seen a turn to empirical data of actual language use, instead of the traditional methods of introspection and acceptability judgements. A recent paper (Waugh et al. 2006), which I treated in 2.6, specifically treats the need to integrate many different kinds of contextual knowledge to analyse discourse. The authors base their work on ideas which run quite parallel to the theoretical framework I presented in Chapter 2. The opening lines of their essay are worth quoting:

“Our purpose here is to exemplify the benefits of an integrated approach to the study of discourse that examines culturally contextualized examples of authentic language use with a rich, fine-grained analysis derived from various empirical approaches. By discourse we mean the actual use of language for communication. . . . Moreover, discourse and its communicative functions are intertwined with

linguistic, cognitive, social, cultural, historical, ideological and biological patterns, and none of these exist separately from the others.”

—Waugh et al. (2006, 120)

The present study likewise aims to examine “culturally contextualized examples of language use,” in its many-faceted settings. As the paper cited above, I have found it necessary to use multiple approaches to be able to contextualize the linguistic phenomena I am describing. However, while having similar goals and theoretical frameworks as the work cited above, the present study differs from it by using data from a quite different setting with quite different possibilities and constraints influencing the process of gathering and analysing the data. In looking back on this process I find that many decisions of methodological importance in my particular case was based on other concerns than strictly methodological considerations, or rather, other concerns had to be accommodated alongside the requirements of the methodological ideals. This is by no means an uncommon situation in many social science studies: the research questions and the specifications for informants have to be revised and adapted to practical concerns and to the data collection possibilities actually available to the researcher (Waugh et al. 2006, 135).

In my analysis I worked to identify forms of *speech genres*, a category of linguistic units that is discussed at length in Chapter 2. Unlike many other studies, these entities were not already defined, such as might be the case with a study of say, pronouns. I had to look for hitherto undescribed entities in the data. Furthermore, I understood each form to be locally occurring in communities of practice and not necessarily pervading the larger speech community. Culture and context were expected to have an impact on language use, but I could not know exactly how in advance. The collection of data at the outset of the study thus had to be fairly open to all sorts of available material which seemed relevant.

At first knowing that other researchers have found different patterns of language use in school and at home, I was curious as to what patterns might show up in this Cameroonian context. Would they be comparable to e.g. Heath’s (1983) study of different communities and schooling in the United States? How would they differ? I decided to let salient entities ‘emerge’ (see 1.1.1) by observing classes and village life, and filming and transcribing interaction in natural settings in these contexts. I needed to see what kind of relations the interacting participants had with each other, and to other actors, and so I needed to look into the socio-cultural environment generally. Hence use of controlled experimental settings was not relevant.

## 3.1 Choice of target area and target group

In order to study the interrelation between language, cognition and interaction, I chose to look at what happens when children start school without knowing the language used as a medium of instruction at school. This meant that the target group could be minority-language children starting school in a majority-language setting, such as is often the case in Western countries with a large immigrant population. There is, however, already a number of studies which deal with this situation from pedagogical and linguistic points of view. Though certainly not an exhausted theme of study, the minority-language children are definitely present on the research agendas and public budgets of most European countries with an immigrant population.

The other option, then, was to look at the multitudes of students in the former colonies of various European countries, especially in Africa, which present a more urgent need of analysis and have far less resources for research ready. In the majority of cases, African states have chosen to use the language of the former colonial power as official language and hence also as the medium of instruction in schools. A complex web of relations and powerplay, between the colonial power and the new nations, and between the educated elites and the masses in each country, is usually at the root of these decisions (Brock-Utne 2000). On top of this comes the ethnically fragmented makeup of many nations, creating another layer of power disputes and communication problems, where English, French or other foreign languages may play the role of a more neutral *lingua franca*. There is also the obvious question of resources for developing teaching materials in a large number of local languages. Clearly a state struggling to meet the demand for schooling in the first place, will have even bigger problems to fill a demand for linguistically adapted teaching materials. The very hegemony of the former colonial languages creates its own demand as well, as the languages are seen as resources for upward mobility; this theme runs through the whole history of Western-style schooling in Africa (see Chapter 6). Most people do not distinguish clearly between learning a language and using it directly as the medium of instruction.

All of these factors, from material resources to more ideologically based stances on language choice, contribute in my view to a very real need for actual information of the processes which take place.

In my case, the question of medium of instruction together with other issues of language and learning arose from observations of the school situation in the specific area where I spent the seven years from 1992 til 1999 as a missionary worker in the Nizaa language project. Choosing a target area for the study was thus influenced by my own knowledge of, and interest in, the Galim-Tignère area in Cameroon. The choice meant that I had some first-hand knowledge of

the area before starting the present project. I also had a network of friends and former colleagues both among the Norwegian missionaries and the Nizaa themselves, which proved to be a great asset in carrying out the necessary field work. I had some competence in the Nizaa language, having spent seven years in the Nizaa literature work and written a master's thesis on the use of chained-verb-constructions (Kjelsvik 2002). The language competence made a study of teaching-learning interaction at home more possible. The comparative aspect of looking at language use patterns both at home and in school adds to the interest of the study.

#### **An under-schooled community**

The Galim-Tignère area has some other interesting traits from the point of view of choosing it as target area. This district has a long-standing reputation for being under-educated.<sup>1</sup> In the 1987 census the school enrolment ratio was the lowest in Adamaoua: only about 17 % of the school age children were enrolled in formal schooling (Dongmo 1996, 43). The ratio has very likely risen since,<sup>2</sup> not the least with the government efforts of the last few years to create more schools and engage more teachers. Still the present and former lack of schooling means that most of the children have little access to the use of French in their local village, because so few persons have gone to school and know it. Instead people use Fulfulde to communicate with other ethnic groups and to some extent with the authorities. This situation means that most children entering school in the area really do not know French at all, or have a very scant knowledge of it. For the purpose of studying the processes of starting school with a completely unknown language, then, the area is well-suited.

#### **The Nizaa**

The Nizaa ethnic group is an interesting case in itself. As described at some length in Chapter 4, it was the only ethnic group of the Adamaoua that managed to stay independent in the days of the Fulbe expansion in the 19th century. They take much pride in this fact and that they still have a Nizaa ruling family descending directly from the resistance leaders. At the same time, they have been strongly influenced by the cultural and religious shift brought about by the establishment of Fulbe rule in Adamaoua. The Nizaa were on the path of total assimilation only a few years ago. The language project starting in 1992 seems to have been one important factor halting this development, focusing the existing resistance against

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<sup>1</sup>For more details about school development in the area see 4.6.2 and 6.3.

<sup>2</sup>There are unfortunately not any clear numbers, as the results of the 2005 census has not been published yet.

becoming Fulbe culturally and linguistically. Nizaa literacy work was started in 1995 and has been going on most of the time since then, with some students each year, most of them illiterate men.

There is today a much stronger self-awareness among the Nizaa, and a will to develop their language and keep up their culture. They created a Nizaa cultural association in 1999, but it was not very active the first years. New leaders were elected in 2005, and there has been an upsurge in activity since then, with village meetings and money collecting to pay literacy teachers. A study focusing on the process of meeting another language in school would be of even more interest in this situation of linguistic awareness.

My study contain a description of the Nizaa as a cultural community in Chapter 4. This is quite necessary background material for getting a feel of the village setting of the microanalysis in Chapter 5 especially, with its indepth analysis of children's social games as a form of cultural transmission.

I have furthermore a more thorough presentation of the Cameroonian schoolsystem, its history and present-day form in Chapter 6, to provide the necessary background information for the school interaction analysis.

## **3.2 Collecting data - a long and winding road**

So if one wants to study actual language use in its cultural context, how precisely does one capture such a thing? How can we “hold the smoke of interaction still for study” to use Moerman’s (1988, 3) imaginative phrase? If one thinks that the collected pieces of language use need to be culturally contextualized, how exactly is this done? What kind of data is needed, exactly? To answer these questions, I will present some important choices on the long and winding road of getting together a dataset for this dissertation.

Some basic methodological directions were given by the research traditions I use, such as recordings of language use and ethnographic description. With these, I had to assemble two somewhat different sets of data, on the language use patterns in school and in the Nizaa-speaking village and home environment. Both sets required basically much the same methods: collecting enough samples of language use to be able to discover salient entities and enough documentation of the use situations to be able to understand meanings and mechanisms in the use of the patterns.

In 3.2.1 I detail the practical arrangements of field work and research conditions. In 3.2.2 I discuss the use of participant observation and in 3.2.3 on page 72 my use of other ethnographic documentation methods. In 3.3, I present the methods used in processing the language data collected, together with research questions and analytical categories.

### 3.2.1 Field work and practical arrangements

I had two main periods of field work. The first period, from the end of August till the beginning of November 2005, focused mostly on the school data. I started classroom observations at the 'Nizaa' public school in Galim, where I visited all the 4 classes, but spent most time in the two lowest grades. I also had days of observation at the other two public schools of the village. At the end of the month, I visited three other villages in the area to do class observations there. I also visited the *Lycée* (high school) of Galim, and spent an early morning in a Coranic school. In between school visits, I was able to attend all in all 5 parents meetings at different schools, and a meeting of headmasters convened by the *Inspecteur Principale d'Enseignement Générale*, The Education Inspector of the Galim-Tignère district. I did several interviews (see 3.2.3 on page 74). After a further period of class observations in all three public schools, though most heavily in the Nizaa school, I left Galim 27th of October and went to Ngaoundéré, where I had a day of class observations in a so-called *pilot school* of the Lutheran Church, before leaving for Europe.

Galim has no public power plant, so I bought a small electric generator to operate my computer, printer and videocamera equipment. Still electricity was a constant hassle. I had to run the generator outside to avoid exhaust fumes, but had no shed or cover for it there, and so could not use it on rainy nights. The generator itself also had frequent smaller technical problems. I had planned to work on capturing videos on my computer and use them in feedback interviews with teachers and others, but this proved impossible, both because of the electricity problems and because it turned out that the software I had brought to work with videos did not function well. This was an even greater drawback for transcription of Nizaa material, where I had need of a native speaker to do it.

The first weeks in Galim I had a young girl, Ms. Doudou Pauline, live with me in my rented house in the village. She helped me with practical chores and was a valuable link to people I otherwise would not have met. When she left for her own school in October, my former colleague of the Nizaa literature project, Mrs. Patouma Sambo Jacqueline, came from Tignère to stay with me the last 14 days. She did in this period three sessions of storytelling in the Nizaa public school, which I recorded, and we started a Nizaa-French dictionary with the Shoebox software developed by SIL (Société Internationale de Linguistique/Summer Institute of Linguistics).

In the second period I focused on village life and teaching-learning interaction in Nizaa. I spent 5 weeks in a small village some 30 or 40 km south of Galim, from 21st January till 26th February, of a total 7 weeks. In the present work the name of the village is Mipom. This is not the real name, however, just as I do not use the real names of most people appearing in the analysed recordings; Patouma



### 3.2. COLLECTING DATA

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is an exception to this rule. She agreed to come with me to the village, as she had close relations to people there. I lived with a host family with 4 children (see Chapter 5 for further details). Patouma worked with the Nizaa-French dictionary and as a research assistant for me. In addition to observing village life as well as possible, I had two further days of observation at the local school.

Coming back from the bush, I spent a day in Tignère observing a teacher student from the teacher's college there teaching a practice class, and interviewed him and his tutor. Later I interviewed Dr. Gabriel Mba of the NACALCO in Yaounde (see section 3.2.3) on my way home.

I spent a last period of 3 weeks in Cameroon in March 2007. I then stayed with Patouma at her house in Tignère and we worked on transcribing the most necessary parts of the Nizaa recordings. I also helped her to type two theses by teacher college students, which turned out to give me valuable information on teachers' values and pedagogical outlook.

#### 3.2.2 Ethnography and participant observation

From the more anthropologically minded Ethnography of Communication and its descendants Language Socialisation and Community of Practice theory comes the time-tested method of *participant observation*. In short this means that the analyst becomes a part of the group he or she is studying, participating as well as possible in their practices for a longer period of time, while also observing and documenting their activities in as many ways as possible (Saville-Troike 1989). The procedure is still a standard part of most anthropological research projects. By its unsystematized scanning of information through direct participation and observation of the object of study, it serves the role of basic method which other techniques with clearer targets may build upon (Pelto & Pelto 1978, 69).

Participant observation comes in many degrees, however, from researchers participating as little as possible in the practice observed, to researchers involving themselves fully in community life.

In my case I used a form of participant observation in the village field work. I participated in various ways in the household where I lived for 5 weeks, by sharing their meals, helping with washing clothes and dishes, fetching water in the river, and taking part in other easy chores.

In the larger village context I attended social occasions such as vaccination campaigns, official holidays, parent meetings, a marriage feast and a gathering to comfort a mother whose child had died during the night. I observed what was going on as well as I could without a full mastery of the language, noting incidents and physical conditions around me in my field journal and describing procedures I saw others do. I often taped episodes which seemed interesting, a practice which made my host family and the nearest neighbours quite familiar with the camera.

In the school observations I used a much more withdrawn role, sitting mostly in a back corner of the class room and observing without actively taking part in teaching or interaction generally. As I got more experience in recording class room interaction, I changed place, putting myself in front of the class instead. Though the students were then constantly reminded of my presence and presumably might act differently, I found it important to be able to observe more directly their interaction with the teacher, and back of class did not offer a good enough vantage point. I took extensive notes of classroom activity, noting start time of each change in activity, and specifics of what was going on. It is however impossible to note quickly enough to get everything said, and so recordings were indispensable for a more detailed study of language use. Though the teachers and students of course recognised my camera as such, I took care not to show them the built-in view screen on the camera, so as to stop them from getting too occupied with their own appearance on this little 'TV'. It is of course possible that the teachers to some extent 'played to the camera', though my general impression was that they behaved as they would normally do, in the large majority of cases.

Besides direct classroom observations, I spent many breaks chatting with the teachers, taking part in their conversations. This was both a source of data to me, and a way of getting acquainted with the teachers, or, rather, for them to get acquainted with me as a benevolent person, not out to criticise them. One should beware of the standard 'white man's' role, or maybe I should say Norwegian role, which is so willing to give 'helpful' advice, whether asked for or not. It was a problem to get time to note at least some of the conversations down, as it seemed strange to make long pauses for me to write down interesting things. Still, some valuable points of view and observations came from these discussions, giving me ideas on what to look for next or meshing in with other information.

#### **The observer's paradox**

The well-known observer's paradox is the problem of observing something one is part of and still get what one may call authentic data. By being there, however inobtrusively, the observer changes the original situation. By not being there, the situation is presumably not changed, but neither will any observation be made (Labov 1972).

A totally passive observation as if through a glass wall is hardly possible in ethnographic research, and would probably become a source of error in its own right. The 'researcher-free' condition of observation is impossible to obtain. Seeing this, it is better to make clear one's role and possible impact on the data, than hiding it. Participant observation is a research method which is, or should be, open about the presence of the researcher in the data.

In some cases the researcher's person can become a resource. As an example

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I can use my experience in classroom observations. As I intended to influence the data as little as possible, I did not actively take part in classroom interaction in any way, I did not act as an assistant teacher or played at being a student. I sat quietly in my corner, taking notes and occasionally video-taping. This detached attitude could be hard sometimes, when for example students tried to strike up a whispered conversation with me, or when teachers physically punished students. Still, there were instances when the teachers themselves noted my presence in class, using it to goad students to perform better in front of a visitor studying schooling. In other cases the simple rules of polite social interaction overrode my effort of unintrusiveness, as when the whole class rose and chorused ‘Good morning, Madam!’ as I entered a classroom (see the beginning of Chapter 7). Such incidents came to be data in its own right, giving me important insights.

My experience with the observer’s role in this project also showed me how my own person, my very presence, could set off some chain of activity which would not otherwise have happened.

For example I actively worked to have sessions of Nizaa story-telling in the main Nizaa school of the area, and taped these sessions. I did this partly to see how Nizaa children in a normally French school environment would react to the use of their own language in class, and partly because it was very much in line with my former role as protagonist of the Nizaa language. That role is not only a mask I put on to explain my presence as researcher in Galim, but an important part of who I am. When given the opportunity—I discovered that ‘National culture’ was part of the curriculum and opened up for the use of local storytellers—and having the necessary storytelling person close by me, I jumped to the possibility of doing it.

These sessions did turn out to be a rich source of data, of which only a fraction is used in the present study. However, the storytelling sessions also have another side pertinent to the question of a researcher’s presence in a community—we easily become agents of change. To have my research assistant tell Nizaa tales in three different classes, with the happy support of the teachers and taped by the European researcher, is an act which is quite likely to enhance the status of that language and that culture in the area. I rather hope so in this case; but if this particular transgression of the anthropologist’s code of conduct did not harm anybody, the researcher should always be aware of how her acts may influence, not only the data in a research project, but the very community she is studying.

A somewhat different example comes from the two sessions of gameplaying which I organised in the little village where I stayed for my fieldwork (see 3.2.1 on page 66). Though the children often played different games by themselves in the evenings, these occasions were different. As they took place in the courtyard of a compound instead of some open place off a village street, they came to be carried out in the presence of adult women who conceived of these sessions as

part of my work to record authentic Nizaa life. These women then actively guided their children in how to perform the games, as they themselves had played them when young. There is no doubt that the games were played somewhat differently on these occasions with the double distorting factors of a white person filming the action and mothers and aunts correcting and showing how to do the game. On the other hand I got data of direct adult-child teaching situations which would otherwise have been hard to come by. By looking at the differences between the games as played by the children and how they should have been played according to the mothers, I was also able to see something of the changes taking place in the local peer culture. Again data influenced by the researcher are not necessarily worthless, they only require awareness of what the influences are.

There is an inherent danger in the genre of anthropological descriptions of exotic cultures, or maybe any culture, diagnosed by the use of the present tense. The group in question *is* like that, they *behave* so-and-so, they *do* such-and such. It is as if they were living in a vacuum, without changes or variations whatsoever. This is of course quite misleading: any group will have a history and be in constant interchange with its surroundings, and most knowledge and so-called belief systems will be socially distributed. The use of the 'eternal present' is a gross oversimplification. In fact, it often leads to 'essentialism', the idea that there is some unchangeable inner core in people, so that by attaching a label identifying them, we know something substantial about them. This translates easily into an idea of no matter what a person does or says, their label of an ethnic or racial identity is seen as causal to certain behaviours (Gutiérrez & Rogoff 2003). I have tried to avoid the use of the 'eternal present', while still describing relevant commonalities and cultural traits of the Nizaa.

Both to show what data some description is based on and to be frank about how my own presence influenced data, I make extended use of 'research anecdotes' from my field journal in my presentation of data in the analysis chapters. By telling of things that I myself witnessed, I can exemplify and enrich the analysis. By stating that these cases are indeed based on such and such observations, I avoid the danger of too wide-sweeping generalisations. I cannot say that all Nizaa would do likewise as some individual or group that I saw act in a given situation, but this individual or this group *did* act like that, and that observation *does* count for something (Rogoff 2003, 83). The solution to the observer's paradox lies in the open use of things happening around the researcher's person, because such incidents can also tell us about the contingencies of a situation.

#### **Building trust, shaping a role**

A last point about participant observation as staying within a group for a longer period of time is that quality interaction with the community studied is needed.

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The researcher must endeavour to build trust, if she wants to see people behave as they would normally do. She must have enough trust from people to get truthful answers when she wants to check for correct understandings of observed phenomena, and she must try to get as much as possible an insider's view of things.

To do this, the researcher must have some role to play in the community while she is there, so that others can make sense of her presence and choose how to act (Agar 1996, 105). To explain my project in close detail to Nizaa parents and the teachers at the schools would probably not have worked very well, not the least since I at the time had not completely clarified my own main research questions. Still, I had to present myself and my research in some way, also because those studied have a right to know that they are observed, and why. I thus built partly on my own earlier role as a person interested in the Nizaa language, trying to learn it and to use it to make books in Nizaa. Many people knew that in my former role I had visited a number of villages to speak of the necessity of learning to read and write Nizaa and to develop Nizaa as a written language. In my new role as researcher, I tried to come across as a person that still cared about the future of the Nizaa language, though I had no formal ties to the Nizaa Literature Center anymore.

At the same time I spoke of my interest in schooling, to some extent framing it as looking for an answer to the question of why the Nizaa have been so slow to embrace education, something which has puzzled educators and others for many years. I tried to be clear on my general support for formal schooling, agreeing with teachers and other informants alike that it was important for the children to go to school and to learn French. Fortunately I was able to present my work and my goals on a meeting for all the headmasters of the area at the district school inspector's office, in addition to speaking with individual headmasters at their schools. At that occasion I also made clear to them that I was not going to use their real names in my work, saying that though I had no plans of slandering their work, one never knows what other readers elsewhere might think, and it is customary to anonymize informants in this way to protect them.

The positive attitude to formal schooling had to be tempered by a ready acceptance of people who for some reason chose *not* to send their children to school, so as to open the possibility for them to tell me why. I was not in a position to judge, though I expressed my interest in the how's and why's.

A special problem was how to handle recordings and observations of children. According to standard protocols for the use of human subjects for data collection, I should obtain permission from parents and if possible from the students themselves before starting such a project (Gonzalez-Marquez, Becker & Cutting 2006, 74). This turned out to be practically impossible in the Cameroonian context. I asked first permission of the school headmasters to come into classes

and observe, starting with the school closest to my living quarters. I was readily admitted after explaining my goals along the lines sketched out above. When I asked about how I would get permission from the parents, however, the headmaster just scoffed: if he as headmaster had given his blessing to research going on in his school, what could the parents say? He thought it completely unnecessary to ask them. I did, however, present myself at parent meetings at all the three primary schools in Galim, and at a parent meeting in the smaller village of Mipom, giving at least some parents (fathers) an idea of what I was going to do. I have also anonymized names of children in and out of classes, and other people, in the present study.<sup>3</sup>

Trust is finally often built not on whatever explanation a researcher might give of her project and ideas, but simply by living with people on an everyday basis. My earlier year-long work in the area was somewhat helpful here, though a great number of people I met on my fieldwork had never seen me before. This was not enough by itself, though, I still had to build trust on the basic level. Partaking in social events, giving a helping hand by transporting a sick child to the clinic in Galim, eating the food I was served without complaints and often with relish, all of these were acts which over time made people feel that they knew me somewhat and could trust me. From one point of view I clearly stayed too short to really get into every aspect of their lives. On the other hand, I think I made a good enough start to use the data I collected with some confidence.

#### **3.2.3 Other ethnographic documentation**

Though direct observations of everyday life is important to get an idea of how things work in a group, other data are also very useful. I used several other sources, such as relevant literature on the area, interviews, a questionnaire, and in the case of the school observations, I took care to observe several different classes in the area, some of which had other ethnical mixes. I also observed some classes outside the area entirely.

##### **Keeping a field journal**

Throughout the two first periods of fieldwork I kept a field journal to record the observations I made, besides making notes of my own movements. I did approximately one hundred hours of class observations all together, with quite detailed notetaking. I also wrote down episodes I witnessed outside the school context, what was said and done, by whom; if possible I asked for further

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<sup>3</sup>This was complicated by the fact that if I used some other common name on a person, it was quite likely to apply to someone else in the group. I had no way of controlling this, as I never had access to complete classlists or knew all the people present at various occasions.

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information from ‘insiders’, such as Patouma or other people who knew French. Some of the interview material is in the form of journal notes only, not recorded. Working on my data later, I have found my notes indispensable aides for my memory.

For easier consulting I have entered much of my notes in Shoebox databases. The Shoebox program<sup>4</sup> provides useful software solutions for organising anthropological material as well as linguistic analysis and data.

About one third of the school observations are fully entered into a database in Shoebox, while the rest of the school visits are entered as short notes of place, date and time spent in what classes. An associated file contains facts about the schools such as size, number of teachers, date of creation if known, and student numbers.

Another database assembles the parent interviews I made, organised by name of parent. An associated file contains biographical data on a good number of the people I met, birthdate, civil state, number of children, relations to other people in the material, and remarks on life history if known. The biography file was also useful for the ethnographic material.

A further database contains ethnographic material organised by date of observation. Specifications of places, participants, sources of further information are again given alongside each entry.

The Shoebox databases can be searched electronically and are much easier to use than scribbled journalnotes. On the other hand it is less easy to incorporate such things as sketches of blackboard drawings or a map over my *quartier* in Mipom.

#### **Ethnographic and historical literature**

I used the existing historical and anthropological literature on the area as much as possible, to get the larger picture and also to obtain some information on the economic conditions and the history of the Nizaa as a group. It is important to have an understanding of the economic life of an area, what people live from, what trade they engage in and what contacts they make to gain a livelihood. There are several both Cameroonian and Western historians and ethnographers who have engaged themselves in research on the history of Cameroon before and after the European takeover, and a steady trickle of new studies from MA and PhD students from both the University of Yaounde and the Anthropos project at the University of Ngaoundéré/University of Tromsø. The Annual Reviews of the University of Ngaoundéré, of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and of the Anthropos project, have been important sources of information on Northern

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<sup>4</sup>Available as freeware at <http://www.sil.org/computing/shoebox/index.html>

Cameroon, together with other literature. Other anthropological literature on groups in the area exist as well, notably Boutrais (1995-96) which minutely describes the life of the nomadic Fulbe pastoralists here and in West-Cameroon. A further source of information is Lode (1990) which presents the history of the Norwegian and American Lutheran missions working in the Adamoaua, later the *Eglise Evangelique Luthérienne du Cameroun* (EELC), from 1925 to the late 1980s. All of these works come together to provide a quite detailed backdrop to present-day Nizaa life, explaining some traits as longstanding historical processes rather than isolated facts. Relevant parts of the historical and anthropological material is presented in Chapter 4, or crop up in the analysis.

#### Interviews

To get more specific data on the Galim area, I interviewed Mrs. Solveig Bjøru Sandnes, a former missionary teacher at the mission's primary school in Galim in the early 60's, and Mr. Adamou Luc, who worked as a teacher there a little later. Mr. Adamou is today the leader of the EELC Department of Education. Mrs. Bjøru Sandnes kindly made available to me her private photographs of a Nizaa initiation ceremony, a very rare documentation of these secret rites, and both contributed concrete historical information.

Another interesting person to interview was Dr. Gabriel Mba, one of the leaders of the NACALCO (National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees). One of the goals of the association is to promote the use of local languages in the three first grades of primary school. They have developed a two week course for teachers who want to teach using the first language of the children. The Nizaa language project is a member of the association, and dr. Mba had already visited it and other similar projects in Adamoaua a number of times. The EELC still had several language projects going in 2005, partly doing Bible translation work, and partly literature development and mother tongue literacy. The last activity was supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) for a number of years (1993–2006). I interviewed the coordinator of the EELC Department of Translation and Literacy, Mrs. Neba Lucie, getting valuable information on how the projects worked both from her and dr. Mba.

An important interview with the local Inspecteur d'Enseignement of the Galim-Tignère district, Mr. Goviata Mathieu, gave me much factual information on the school situation in the area, such as the number of schools and teachers.

To obtain more data on the circumcision and initiation rites of the Nizaa, I interviewed Mr. Adamou Robert, the village chief (*jawro*) of Gonkira. Unfortunately the tape recorder malfunctioned, and most of the interview was lost except the notes I could make from memory. Several conversations with Mr. Hamadicko



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Daniel, a former worker in the Nizaa language project, also gave valuable information about both old customs of the Nizaa, and what it was like to be a student at the mission's school in the late 50's and early 60's. These talks were not taped, however, as they were unplanned-for conversations, rather than interviews. I also used my notes from an interview with Mrs. Mama Sambo made in 1996.

I finally made some semi-structured interviews with six parents and two adult sixth-grade students about their view of modern schooling. The number is so small because I found it difficult to arrange for and carry out such interviews. The language was a problem: I could interview directly only the parents who spoke French, as I did not have a suitable interpreter available for Nizaa interviews for most of the first field work period when I focused on the school data.

It was also somewhat difficult to get into contact with parents except in the cases where I had some other point of contact as well. Pieces of written informations sent home with the students was not a solution as there is a great number of illiterate parents in Galim. The teachers of the schools did send out written convocations to parents meetings, but they had to do it by way of copying by hand the necessary information on small slips of paper which they sent home with the students, and it only worked because everybody knew what it said anyways. Even though I had a printer to use with my laptop, I could not just mass-copy a letter to parents, presenting myself and the project and say that I would be along to interview them in the next few weeks. I had to get into some kind of personal contact with parents to be able to do an interview.

I did have one go at arranging an interview with somebody I knew next to nothing about. I told a boy who was one of the better students of the fourth grade that I would like to talk with his parents, and could he please tell them to be home in the afternoon tomorrow? Though he came across as knowing some French in class, he obviously had great problems to grasp what I meant in this case, but I got him to come and fetch me the next day. But nobody was at home when we came. After a little waiting around his mother and aunt came back from the fields with a load of sweet potatoes. They spoke no French at all, but was friendly inquisitive about what brought this white person into their courtyard. After some halting conversation in Nizaa where we agreed that the boy certainly was an intelligent young person (*Mêé` á ké`!* 'There are thoughts!'), we washed all the sweet potatoes and I went home with a good heap in a bag. As a parent interview it was a complete failure, but I did get a nice supper.

#### Questionnaires

To get some information on an important group in the data, I prepared a questionnaire (see Appendix) for the teachers. I had 21 responses, from a total of 43 teachers in the district, that is to say from practically all the teachers I met

on my school visits. I normally had a little conversation with the responding teacher as he or she handed back the sheet, to clear up any difficulties (see 6.3.4 for an example). An interesting information to be had from the data of these questionnaires was on their ethnic origins and knowledge of Cameroonian languages. There were for example only two Nizaa teachers in the group, and one of them taught in a school with few, if any, Nizaa children. Many teachers knew some Fulfulde, the main regional language, but by no means all.

### **Focus schools and other schools**

In the school materials, I focused on two schools, the Group 2 public school in Galim, also known as the “Nizaa” school, and the village school of Mipom. Within these materials again, the recordings of the two lowest grades, SIL and CP, seemed most relevant to the project goals. In the case of Mipom these were the only grades in the school. It was however necessary to visit several schools and different grades, to get a broader view of what schooling is like more generally, and what could be seen as personal teaching styles and what was common practices in all schools. I also visited two schools outside this area for the same reason. These other schools with few or no Nizaa students, then functioned as informal cross-checks vis-à-vis the focus schools with most or all Nizaa students.

## **3.3 Discourse analysis and recording**

Much of the data-collecting described in the previous section concerns the documentation of use situations or contexts of language use. Looking now at the collecting of language use instances themselves, there are some fundamental issues to discuss which influence the actual methods adopted. The idea of getting ‘salient entities’ to ‘emerge’ from data carries some presumptions that need to be clarified.

### **3.3.1 Issues of corpus and sampling**

A linguistic structure as defined in 1.1.1 is some sort of regularity in the form and content of linguistic utterances observable in the speech of a number of language users, so that a schematic mental representation of it can be assumed to exist with these users. It may be that the language users themselves label some recurrent feature of language as a salient category, or an ‘outside’ analyst with expert tools describes and labels the structures she sees; both categorisations are the results of the activity of interpretive observers. Any description of such an emergent entity

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or structure of language should always be considered the result of interpretation of an observer at some level, not the structure as such.

Importantly, another basic assumption should be considered as well: that an observed recurrence of some trait or feature will translate into a category which is *relevant* for language users, whether consciously so or not, as a schema that shapes their linguistic utterances in some way.

Given these basic assumptions, the question of choosing between the language users' own categories or the analytical categories provided by the linguist grows less acute. The analysing linguist in principle bases her categories on observed traits of the linguistic utterances in her data, not on preconceived categories. The language users to some extent do the same thing, only with less explicit awareness of many of the (linguist's) categories. They will however often tie more or less formal linguistic categories to functions and use-contexts of language, as part of the meaning of the categories. From the point of view of cognitive linguistics, such 'contextual' meanings is nothing more, nor nothing less, than part of the meaning of the structure, and should be accounted for as such.

In my case I wanted to study "the typical forms utterances are cast in" in certain use situations, that is, I wanted to describe regularities of form and content regarding the units of communication as used in actual interaction of teaching and learning. Units of communication do not always coincide with other linguistic structures such as sentences or words. They are also more closely related to speech contexts, as noted in 2.5.2. These considerations have led to the use of *speech genres* as the main analytical category of the present work (see 2.4.2 on page 34). A *speech genre* as defined in Chapter 2 is a schema for shaping utterances, carrying, or carried by, certain vocalisations and conceptualisations. The schematic nature of the speech genre means that conceptualisation and phonological form vary according to speakers and hearers, and that there will always be more detail in an actual instance than in the schema. The schema description made by the analyst is meant to capture the commonalities of many instances.

The obvious methodological problem with such a program is how to identify instances of schema use before the schema itself is established as an analytical category. A possible solution to this is to go back and forth between the data analysis and the analytical category used, using the total picture to find new instances and then allowing new instances to shed light on the total picture, in an inductive approach to data. This has been called *theoretical sampling* (Glaser & Strauss (1967), cited in ten Have (2007, 147)) and relies on a so-called *constant comparative method*.

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his

data and decides what to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. —Glaser & Strauss (1967, 45)

This view of sampling brings with it the idea that a category can be saturated, i.e., that further instances of the category will not bring new insights (Glaser & Strauss 1967, 61).

Another possible solution to the problem of identifying instances of an as yet unestablished category is to first build a data corpus of language use in naturalistic settings, and then systematically go through the data to find whatever structures there may be. That strategy is used by many conversation analysis studies to explicate patterns, action-types, or sequence-types, using a *comprehensive data treatment* method (ten Have 2007, 148). In principle all cases of a structure must be incorporated in the analysis (Mehan (1979, 21), cited in ten Have (2007, 148)). One uses deviant cases from some emergent pattern to get at underlying and less obvious patterns. The corpus may be less likely to be subjectively biased in this way, and the researcher makes himself answerable to a range of cases which were not selected with a specific idea in mind. However, if the object of study turns out to be fairly infrequent or not very clearly structured this kind of corpus design may be a labourious way of getting only a few instances (ten Have 2007, 148).

### 3.3.2 Sampling in my data

In my case I found that both strategies play a role in my treatment of interactional data. I was interested in language use patterns of teaching and learning, that is, the speech genres employed by teachers/experts and students/learners inside and outside the institutional learning context of modern schooling. This double interest served to create a basically two-class data corpus, one for each context of school learning and village learning.

Teaching and learning situations within these two main contexts could be identified before identifying specific kinds of speech genres within them, so that the corpus was not created entirely by looking for some specific linguistic structures. In this regard I worked along the lines of a comprehensive data treatment strategy. However, the data are of course not comprehensive in the sense of covering the totality of interaction in a longer period of time. One always have to choose bits and pieces of what is going on, in order to keep the data of a manageable size.

#### A basic choice: Video or audio?

The choice between video or audiorecording is of course quite basic, and in my case I had decided on videos very early on. People index the relation of context

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and utterance in many ways. They show how they relate to other people by the way they carry their bodies, where they put their gaze, and what language forms they use. Their co-participants respond in telling ways as well. The possibility of studying better the indexing of context was one of the reasons why I opted for videorecordings rather than only audirecordings. A video tape of some speech event can also capture substantially more information than an audio recording can do, and it is easier to identify speakers and objects they are talking about or handling. The general layout of the situation is clearer, disambiguating otherwise incomprehensible stretches of speech. Communication is simply more than just talking, though talking is a very important part of communication.

I also specifically wanted to study other channels of vocalisation than only the verbal and prosodic channels (see Fig. 2.2 on page 41), like gesture, gaze direction and body configurations, all of which are visible only in videorecordings. I used audiorecordings for another end, however: they are useful when interviewing people for background information. Then the focus of the interview is not on the spoken form as such, but on the content. The researcher can listen to the tapes, or transcribe them, just concentrating on the meaning and less on linguistic form.

To analyse linguistically the recordings of linguistic usage is another matter entirely. Here detailed transcriptions of the speech events are necessary. In my case of looking for speech genres, closely related to context, I found it helpful to put aspects of that context into the transcription itself.

#### **Choosing what to record**

Using video-recordings is a kind of two-stage sampling process. In the first place one has to decide when and what to record, and later which of the recordings should be selected for a closer analysis.

Looking first on the process of selecting what to record, I selected situations from quite general criteria of trying to capture teaching-learning interactions. Of course, not all recordings are hits in that regard. Likewise there must have been quite a number of such situations which passed me by, because I did not see them for what they were, or I had not brought the camera, or I was not fast enough to get it out.

**The school context:** Some decisions on recording were based on what may be called practical considerations, such as wanting to get data on the 'starting school' period, the first meeting with school for many children in the first grade. However, I did not record the very first day of school in Galim, because I deemed video-recording as more disturbing for the classes than notetaking. Later that week I recorded classroom interaction, when the students and teacher had become more used to my presence.

In the shorter village visits I had less time, and consequently brought out the camera earlier. In the village of Mipom, I was able to record the very first day of school,<sup>5</sup> and here I came back to record both in January and in February, making a more developmental view of the interaction possible.

Other recording decisions from the school context were based on the realisation that some interaction going on was ‘different’ in some sense from earlier recorded instances, such as a session of Practical work for the fifth and sixth grade class which blended the students’ ‘village’ skills of cooking and basketry with the skill of explaining a procedure in a school setting. And of course I tried to get interaction from different schools in and around Galim, to look for local differences.

**The village context:** In the village setting, it was more difficult to identify situations of learning for recording, not the least because of language problems. And of course, while everything in school is geared to teaching and learning, village life has many other priorities. I ended up with casting my net wide, recording e.g. much of a wedding procedure from the first pounding of maize for the feast, to the formal entry in the village of the bride and her train, to some of the actual ceremonies taking place during the three-day festivities. The material certainly have ethnographic value, but it is not teaching and learning situations as such. It still has value to document issues of participation structures and ways of interaction generally, and it gives glimpses of the children as they participate in what goes on, on the fringes of things, as it were.

Otherwise I had my camera at the ready and tried to capture instances large and small occurring around me. Though such things as going to river to wash clothes showed me much adult-child interaction, giving insights into language socialisation processes, children playing and so on, it was difficult to pick out clear instances of what I was after. I found that some arranged recording situations were necessary, to get any substantial data at all. In the case of social games played among the children in Mipom, I quickly recognised them as learning contexts, and organised sessions of play explicitly for recording purposes, as noted in 3.2.2 on p. 70. Another occasion was asking an elderly lady to show me how to ‘crochet’ in the traditional way.

**Mixed contexts:** Some of my recordings constitute ‘hybrid data’ between the two main contexts of the study. I recorded Patouma telling traditional Nizaa tales in modern school classes, blending the traditional way of teaching youngsters certain things, and the school way of doing it. The hybrid quality of the situation

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<sup>5</sup>The school did not start there till fully four weeks after the official start-of-term date, and three weeks after the schoolstart in Galim.

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comes out clearly in Patouma's own comment after the first session: 'If a grandfather tells a tale in the village, he never asks questions afterwards. Here I thought I would ask some questions, though, since we were at school.' In the present study they are catalogued with the school videorecordings, but used in the village context analysis (see 5.4.3).

The national festival days are another kind of hybrid data. Though strongly marked by the school institution, they are clearly just as much part of village life. They constitute formal occasions where the village leaders ceremonially watch the procession and do speeches, and there is a large turnout of villagers to watch drill movements and other performances. In the present work, however, they are catalogued with the school recordings, and they are analysed in 7.3.1 on p. 268.

A third hybrid recording which I have not been able to transcribe and thus work properly on, is a session from a Nizaa literacy teachers course, taking place in a classroom of the Galim Group II school. The course was held by Patouma and her colleague in the Nizaa language project, for four young Nizaa men. It is catalogued with the village context recordings, but must await another occasion for transcription and analysis.

#### **Choosing video excerpts**

I came back from field work with about 16 hours of recordings. When I started selecting video excerpts for closer analysis, I was looking for situations of teaching and learning. I turned first to the school recordings, as most interaction in school is about just that. I did not want, however, to look only at the prescribed transmission of knowledge that schools are made for, but other kinds of learning taking place as well. What do children learn besides their ABC, and what language use patterns are used for this and for the ABC?

I worked first to find significant situations, based on other criteria than just language use. I did some transcription work and much viewing of videos, but found it difficult to 'see what I was looking for.' However, as mentioned above, I had thought the 'starting school' period interesting, as a number of children then meet both French and school practices for the first time. I was now surprised to discover that the first grade children I had observed in this period, were able to carry out practices which I knew did not exist in their home environment. This led to look on the data from a community of practice perspective.

The community of practice perspective turned out to be immensely useful, both to analyse language use as part of a larger context, and to give me a sharper eye for participation in practices as a way of learning. Communication is more than just the talk occurring in it, and the notion of *practice*, encompassing all kinds of patterned activities in a group, is a good tool for seeing just that. The school speech genres are tightly bound up with many non-verbal practices, concerning

such things as gestures, body idiom and physical localities and objects.

The extensive recordings I had from the school setting, showed me that there were indeed some recurrent practices and forms of language use, both as regards themes and as regards observable characteristics of language use. I then used my knowledge of these practices to select samples as *focal observations* (ten Have 2007, 24, 145). The detailed analysis of these recordings are to a large extent to be found in Chapters 6 and 7 of the present work. Other transcribed recordings play the role of *specific background observations*, while untranscribed recordings are used as *supportive material* and *general background information*, together with observations made without recordings. As already noted, the description of speech genres in teaching and learning was much enriched by using a practice perspective, covering both linguistic and non-linguistic practices belonging with the communication situation.

By not doing a full analysis of all recorded school interaction, I put aside the comprehensive data treatment option in the actual analysis, using rather a theoretical sampling strategy, without trying to identify, count and incorporate all possible instances of some speech genre, or even all speech genres to be found in this context. I do claim, however, that the speech genres that I describe are present there, and could be found by other analysts as well.

A drawback by opting for a theoretical sampling strategy is that I cannot present a frequency count of occurrences of some or another speech genre. This would have been interesting in view of the importance accorded to frequency as explanation of schema development in Cognitive linguistics, see 1.1.1 on page 3. However, from an informal point of view, all the speech genres I describe are frequent in the material, and this was a reason for choosing the excerpts I did.

The village learning context presented other challenges for selection of focal recordings to analyse. It was substantially smaller, nearly 5 hours as compared to the 11 hours of school recordings (though the hybrid data mentioned above would skew the counts somewhat if catalogued differently). It was also mostly in Nizaa, which I do not know well enough to confidently transcribe, even with the help of the dictionary Patouma had worked out. Though some learning situations could be identified and partly understood, the language problem led to a third trip to Cameroon and three weeks of intensive transcription work with Patouma. We got through the story material and some interactions of interest (and one or two that turned out to be rather less interesting). Unfortunately, we did not get enough time to do a proper job on the game playing recordings. They were difficult pieces of transcription in the first place, as there is much overlapping and noise, but some of it would in hindsight have been of great interest and not that difficult; see 3.3.3 for further comments.

While I would have wished to have more properly transcribed material in Nizaa, I use what I have in the same way as the school data: I look for



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recurrent practices and forms of language use, building again also on other practices entering communication in complex ways. The material which was not transcribed is still useful for filling in the larger picture as specific background observations and supportive material.

The socio-cultural description of Chapter 4 gives the background for the analysis of actual teaching and learning interaction in Chapter 5. Much of Chapter 4 is quite general ethnographic information, but when working with a cultural community which is not well-known to most readers of the present work, this seemed necessary. However, not all and any fact about history, environment and so forth being described there will do to analyse context as it shapes and is being shaped by actual utterances. In the analysis of the interaction, I had to look for contextual traits indexed by the participants themselves in one way or another. An example is the interaction between an expert and a novice analysed in Chapter 5.2.2 on page 153. The expert shows how to make a platter, and at one points she gazes directly at the novice, with immediate effect: the young girl rises and bends over her hands to better observe what she is doing. The importance of this short glance becomes clearer from the description of the general cultural ban on direct eye contact among the Nizaa, and at the same time that general rule of conduct is indexed by the novice's response to the direct glance.

Again I cannot present a total inventory of speech genres, or count the frequencies of use, but I use the data available to me to show some speech genres in action. The transcripts of interaction, the verbal scripts of games and the tale cited all do give information on language use patterns in the village context.

#### **Local genres**

Language users' own categories of speech event types are used in both sets of material to help identify speech genres, as they constitute environments where different linguistic features have typical sites of occurrence.

In the village material, *games*, *tales* and *riddles* are well-known genres with Nizaa labels for talking about them. The introduction to a riddle game is an example of how the use of a schematic speech genre is orienting the participants to the kind of talk that will follow, and form part of the interpretive framework, see 5.4 on page 200.

In the school material, the concept of the *leçon* is a basic category which the teachers and students relate to. Most of Chapter 8 is a detailed analysis of one whole session of a lesson, 16 minutes, because there is a relation between several of the speech genres used and their placement in the larger context of the lesson.

Many analysts see face-to-face interaction as the bridge between the large-scale processes of a society and the individual choices made by persons acting within their sociocultural milieu (see e.g. Erickson (2004), Gee (2005) and

Moerman (1988)). By doing micro-analysis of language in interaction, the analyst can come to understand the individual choices and see the connections to the larger patterns.

### **3.3.3 Transcription of data**

Spoken interaction is the most universal and basic mode of language use, but it is also ephemeral in nature. “Discourse transcription can be defined as the process of creating a written representation of a speech event as to make it accessible to discourse research” (Du Bois, Schuetze-Coburn, Cummings & Paolino 1993, 45). As it is almost impossible to write down spoken language directly, audio or videorecordings are necessary; in fact, this kind of discourse analysis was not possible to do before the invention of modern recording techniques (Mittelberg 2006, 226).

A list of the recordings and transcriptions of both sets is given in Appendix C.

Of the Nizaa material, a total of 5 hours, I transcribed some interactions in Mipom, three storytelling sessions in classes by Patouma, and a further storytelling session in a Nizaa women’s association meeting in Tignère, all in all 57 min. 30 sec. The actual transcription was done by Patouma, while we both worked on the French translation of the Nizaa material, to give me as full an understanding of it as possible. We did likewise with the recordings of child-child interaction and teaching situations in Mipom. Two very interesting sessions of gameplaying turned out to be difficult to transcribe properly, as there is so much commotion and overlapping voices. Here Patouma worked out a version of the game texts as she knew them herself, and we viewed the videos and made a commentary, rather than a full transcription. One game has been transcribed by me, see 5.3.5 on page 183.

The school recordings, just over 11 hours, were much easier to transcribe in many ways. It is almost all in French (except for the 24 min. of storytelling in Nizaa, and the occasional Fulfulde word), and there is comparatively little overlapping and noise in the material. Then I worked on the Mipom school videos and transcribed clips from the first day of the school year in the beginning of Octobre, from January and from February, capturing the development of the class here over 5 months. I transcribed several clips from the first and second grade classes of the Nizaa school in Galim, and from the village school of Wogomdou. I also worked on clips from the fifth and sixth grade of the Nizaa school, and on other school-related material such as the speech held by a teacher on the celebration of the International Teachers’ Day in Galim. Total material transcribed is 1 hour 59 minutes.

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#### **Transcription conventions**

The transcriptions to some extent follow common conventions for transcribing verbal interaction, with some personal adaptations caused by my research goals and other circumstances. The conventions are listed below, and some further comments on likenesses and differences with other conventions are discussed.

- All turns of speech are numbered. A turn is considered to end when another participant starts speaking.
- Start time for each turn is noted at the beginning of the turn, after the name of the person speaking. The time code refers to the timing of the clip, not the videocassette. It uses minutes, seconds and tenths of seconds (00.00.1)<sup>6</sup>
- Pauses in speaking are marked by a timelength of seconds and tenth of seconds, in square brackets, e.g. [3.5]. Any pause between turns is marked by such a timelength at the end of the first turn.
- In between the verbal output of the participants, notes appear on overlapping, voice quality, gaze direction, the person addressed, body positions, gestures and the use of Fulfulde. All such comments are between parentheses and in italics. They appear both in the original and the translated version.
- Punctuation is used to indicate intonation contours, so that a full stop indicates a completed saying, while a comma indicate a transitional rest before continuing an intonation unit. Unfinished contours are indicated by a hyphen.<sup>7</sup>
- Latching turns, when there is no discernible pause between two turns, are shown as one participants turn ending with = and the next turn starting with =
- In the case of lenghtened syllables, I use doubling or tripling of the vowel in the French text (and English translation).
- The original texts in French or Nizaa are written in a leftside column and the translation in a rightside column on the page. In the appendix, the original versions are on the even pages and the tranlated version on the facing uneven pages.

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<sup>6</sup>Smaller time units than tenths of seconds are difficult to capture correctly even with good transcription software.

<sup>7</sup>See also the comments of the transcription example below.

In the transcription example below, the use of = and hyphens may be noted. The teacher ends his turn (29) by letting the sentence hang, hence the use of hyphen, while somebody is talking right away, hence the use of = at the beginning of turn (30). Again in turn (32) the teacher is taking up the thread of Oumarou's unfinished sentence in turn (31), but as there is a pause of 0.7 sec before he does so, I use a hyphen instead of an =.

### Transcription example

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>(29) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.52.4 (<i>stronger; with hand beat</i>) Repêtes, (<i>overlapping talk forward in class, teacher does not react to it</i>) l'eau du marigot est-</p> | <p>(29) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.52.4 (<i>stronger; with hand beat</i>) Repeat, (<i>overlapping talk forward in class, teacher does not react to it</i>) the water of the stream is-</p> |
| <p>(30) <b>Somebody forward:</b> 02.54.3 =L'eau du mari-</p>  | <p>(30) <b>Somebody forward:</b> 02.54.3 =The water of the stre-</p>   |
| <p>(31) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.55.5 L'eau du marigot est- [0.7]</p>   | <p>(31) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.55.5 The water of the stream is- [0.7]</p>  |
| <p>(32) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.57.9 -est comment alors? [0.1]</p>   | <p>(32) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.57.9 -is how then? [0.1]</p>  |
| <p>(33) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.58.7 (<i>looks around</i>) Sale. (<i>glances at teacher</i>) [1.4]</p>   | <p>(33) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.58.7 (<i>looks around</i>) Dirty. (<i>glances at teacher</i>) [1.4]</p>   |
| <p>(34) <b>Issa:</b> 03.02.9 (<i>stands up besides Oumarou</i>) L'eau du marigot est sale. [0.2]</p>  | <p>(34) <b>Issa:</b> 03.02.9 (<i>stands up besides Oumarou</i>) The water of the stream is dirty. [0.2]</p>  |

While numbered turns and identification of speakers are normal traits of most transcriptions, some other features are different. I have chosen to note pauses in real timelengths, instead of using [..], [...], and [...5] for small, medium and long pauses. This was done because the appropriate length of pauses in speaking varies from one speech community to another. I did not know beforehand what would count as a small or a long pause in the groups I studied, and so was reluctant to evaluate the pauses in this way. Noting the actual length of the pause seemed a better way of proceeding, as the data in this way will be accessible for further analysis of pauselengths in conversation. My use of punctuation is also more like ordinary orthography than recommended in some transcription manuals, exclamation marks, question marks, full stops and commas having more or less their prototypical value.

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It is common to have each intonation unit appear on a separate line (Mittelberg 2006, 234), but I chose to not do it that way, mostly because of space limits, as each transcription is presented both in its original language and in English. It would also be awkward for the insertion of comments. Instead each speaker's turn is clearly demarcated, and the intonation units within it indicated by the notation of pauses and use of commas, stops and hyphens.

#### **Transcription techniques and software used**

There exist several software programs to transcribe spoken language, with and without videofunction. I used first and foremost Transcriber, and to some extent ELAN. PRAAT was used for special purposes.

I found it practical to use Transcriber v.1.5.1 for a first transcription of the file, putting in comments only on audible features such as intonation and voice quality. Transcriber is a free software program for transcribing sound available at <http://sourceforge.net>. After loading an audiofile, preferably in .wav format, the researcher can divide it into bits as she wants to, aided by the visualized waveform. Each turn can be marked with name of speaker, and the text is entered on separate lines. The absolute position of the marker is always visible, and the timelength of a selection or a turn is given. All division of the sound into bits of speech or pauses is done manually, from what one hears, helped by the visual picture in the waveform line. A problem in Transcriber is how to transcribe overlapping speech. It is possible to show only two participants overlapping, but the exported written representation is not very clear as to the extent of the overlap.

ELAN, the Eudico Linguistic Annotator, is a multimedia annotator developed by the Max Planck Institute of Psycholinguistics in the Netherlands (<http://www.mpi.nl/tools/>). With this program, both video and audiofiles can be linked up and a common transcription made.

While having quite sophisticated features of stacking several types of transcription on top of each other (such as spoken words, intonational remarks, gaze, gestures, etc.) marking start time and end time for each, I found it less easy than Transcriber to work with. As in Transcriber, soundbites must be made manually from auditive and visual clues, but in ELAN extensive use of the pointing device of the computer is necessary for this. Such a small thing as ELAN lacking a keyboard shortcut for replaying a selected bit also made it less rapid. I sometimes, however, have used the very good functions for export of the written transcriptions, as it is possible to import Transcriber files into ELAN and output to a text format from there. Another nice touch is the possibility of slowing down the speed of a selected bit, to hear more clearly. I also used the videofunction to check for timing of visual happenings, but it was sometimes just as practical to use a program such as Windows Movie Maker for this, going frame by frame

and taking snapshots as needed for illustrations. I must in any case view the video transcribed very closely several times to capture relevant information on the goings on.

PRAAT is a software developed for ‘doing phonetics by computer’, at the Institute of Phonetic Sciences in Amsterdam (see <http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/>). I have used it only occasionally as a help for capturing particular hard to hear bits of audiofiles.

A further complication of transcription comes from the fact that Nizaa must be written with a special font having the eight special glyphs for certain phonemes in that language (e.g. implosive b and d), and rich possibilities for tone markings. With Word-based applications I can use the Tavultesoft Keyman program and a special Cameroonian font developed at the SIL-branch in Cameroon. I, and my language assistant Patouma, was used to this writing system from my former period in the Nizaa literature project. To write my dissertation I had however decided to use the  $\LaTeX$  word processing system, and the Keyman font turned out not to be compatible with that. Instead I used the TIPA-package which has a good and quite complete IPA font, with mostly handy key-combinations for writing special glyphs.

The incompatibility of the writing systems meant however that transcription of Nizaa material with Patouma was somewhat complicated. It had to be done first with the Keyman system in Transcriber, which luckily supported the use of the SIL font, exported via a html-format to Word, and translated line by line there. Then I would work on another copy of the Transcriber transcript and change it into a  $\LaTeX$ -compatible format, which then could be further processed with the Linguex-package in  $\LaTeX$  for a good typographic presentation in the present work.

If possible, I would have made an electronically searchable corpus of the transcribed data, to facilitate analysis and later work on the data. Unfortunately it proved impossible for me to assemble such a corpus. A major obstacle here was the problem of fonts for writing the Nizaa language. A more developed Unicode font system would presumably solve many of my problems with corpus design for African writing systems, but this is not ready as yet.

### **Preparing videos for transcription**

Before getting down to transcription itself, however, several processes had to be carried out on the raw video. For recording I used a Sony handheld videocamera which produced digital videos on cassettes (.dvi-files). I then captured the video onto a computer with Windows Movie Maker. It has several possibilities for formats in which to save the film. The .avi-format, though very accurate, requires a lot of memory space and heavyduty processors, and a number of other applications have trouble handling them; I lost quite some time trying to work on

### 3.4. THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE DATA FOR THIS STUDY

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these films before I found out that this was not a good format for my purposes.

I then opted for .wmv, Windows Media Audio/Video files, as these are much 'lighter' and easy to handle in Windows applications such as Windows Media Player. They had other drawbacks, however, such as incompatibility with the ELAN program. I could make audiofiles from the videos in Windows Movie Maker, these were in .wma-format (Windows Media Audio file), but again this format did not work well with the Transcriber and ELAN programs, not producing the visual waveform. I therefore bought a converter program (*Cucusoft All to Mp3 Converter*) which could convert the .wma files to .wav-format, one of the audio-formats used by all the applications mentioned above. But both capturing and conversion of files are time-consuming, often requiring more time than playing the film itself. Especially on my laptop, I could not do any other work when these processes were going, as they demanded so much capacity.

I had hoped to make DVD's of my videos, and leave them in Cameroon for Patouma to transcribe. I also would have liked to give such DVD's to those appearing in the recordings. This idea did not work out at all. Another Cucusoft program for producing DVD-films from my videos did not work as it should, presumably because the .avi-files were too heavy for it to handle. Neither did the more professional NERA DVD-burning program work. In the last case it was probably not properly installed and I did not have enough knowledge and experience of how to use it correctly. When power supply is irregular, and there are many other things to do on the computer, it was not tempting to use hours first to capture video, than to save it in other formats and convert it to usable files.

When I later did get a DVD-program that worked alright (Roxio Easy CD Creator 5), I found out that not all the DVD and CD formats used in Europe are compatible with the DVD-players typically sold in Cameroon, which are often of Chinese origin.

The troublesome experiences I have had with the technical parts of video-recordings and transcription have convinced me that more professional software, and more knowledge of how to use it from the outset, would not be a waste of time or money. I especially regret using Windows Movie Maker to capture video, since in both of the transcriptions programs I could not use the .wmv format directly, but had to do further processing. An easily available software such as QuickTime would have solved that problem, but I did not know that till it was too late.

## 3.4 The sufficiency of the data for this study

Can the data selected for the dissertation contribute to answer the main research question of what speech genres can be found in the interaction of teaching and learning of different settings? Can their proposed emergence as schematic

linguistic units be shown? The points of contention as to the sufficiency of the data for my project lie in the twin questions of quantity of data and naturalness of the data.

As for naturalness, the need for using spontaneous and natural language use data is obvious. Still some of my data would not have come into existence without some action on my part, this is especially true of the village life material. Nevertheless, data 'influenced' in some way or other by the researcher can still be used, with the necessary awareness of this influence. The previous discussion has also noted how relevant data can emerge from hybrid situations of language use and from usage situations partly created by myself as researcher.

In the school materials, I am reasonably sure of the naturalness of the recorded and observed interaction. Episodes where my presence in class was overtly alluded to by the teacher can even be used to show certain traits of the classroom discourse. The school data are also, not surprisingly, quite abundant in teaching-learning interaction events. The wealth of material make comparisons of different classes from a community of practice perspective possible and interesting.

As for the quantity of data, the village materials are substantially smaller than the school data, and they are less accessible, being in Nizaa and sometimes Fulfulde. There are fewer clear instances of teaching-learning interaction, so few actually as to make impossible any grand claims of describing speech genres used by the whole Nizaa cultural community. What can be gleaned from the data are a few repeated usage events in teaching situations that possibly are entrenched as speech genres of teaching and learning in the small setting where they were recorded. Otherwise the material show several 'learning environments' rather than direct teaching events with targeted learners. This in itself, though, is an important finding when the total field of teaching and learning is considered.

There certainly are speech genres in these environments, some of which I draw attention to in Chapter 5. Still, there is no question that more recordings of direct teaching seances would have been desirable for a fuller analysis. As it is, the data give glimpses rather than the full picture.

The next chapter will present the larger context of interaction by describing its physical, historical and social setting, the Galim-Tignère area of Cameroon. The multilingual character of the area is noted, and a presentation of the key institutions of the village itself and the family units are given.



## Chapter 4

### The Nizaa in history and society

On the outer wall of the *chefferie* (the chief's compound) in Galim is inscribed the words 'Lamidat de Galim' and the year 1765, see Fig. 4.1 on page 93. Islamic/Arabic symbols adorn the wall as well: a crescent moon with a star above, palm trees and crossed sabres. The mural thus presents the Nizaa as a Moslem chiefdom or *lamidate* going back more than 200 years.

This public representation of the Nizaa group is in fact quite recent, though: The present chief, Mohamadou Hayatou Hamadina, had it made after his enthronement in 2002. But it highlights three traditionally important rallying points for the Nizaa: the institution of chiefs, *wan`* (in Nizaa), and *laamiido*<sup>1</sup> (in Fulfulde), their relation to Islam, and their historical traditions of relation with their area. The Moslem symbols and the use of French speak of their relations with the society at large. Their own language is however conspicuously absent.

An outline of the history of the Nizaa is commemorated in another mural put up by lamido Hayatou, inside the walls of the *chefferie* and facing the lamido's private garden, see Fig. 4.2 on page 93. This mural cites the names of the chiefs from the beginning to himself, and marks three important events in the oral traditions of the Nizaa: their origin in Bibemi and subsequent arrival in the Galim area, their time of refuge on the Jim mountain, and the installment at the actual site of the present head village, Galim. Again there is an emphasis on the role of Islam: even the earliest lamidos carry Moslem/Fulfulde names.

Both of the murals are based on a number of oral traditions still living among the Nizaa. The annual commemoration of the Jim fighting is well known in Cameroon as the 'festival of the Nyem-Nyem', several times broad cast on the national radio and television company, CRTV. The oral stories about their history as a people are important identity carriers for the Nizaa today, with the resistance

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<sup>1</sup>I normally use the form *lamido* in English text, as this is the usual English (and French) spelling. The Nizaa term for chief also is written without tonemarking when occurring in English text.

stories of Jim as the most prominent.

To arrive at an understanding of both the Nizaa and the sociolinguistic setting they live in today, it is useful to look at the history they claim for themselves together with the general history of the Adamawa of the last 200-250 years. In the following pages I start with a short description of the geographical setting of the Nizaa in 4.1, before going on to give a historical outline of the nineteenth century in the Adamawa with an emphasis on the Fulbe expansion, in 4.2, because the Fulbe movements have had such a strong impact on the situation later. After looking at the larger picture of Adamawa, I continue with an outline of the Nizaa history in 4.3, before presenting the linguistic setting of today, and their language, in 4.4. Finally I will present an overview of the Nizaa as a cultural community in 4.5, noting themes such as village layout, family relations and marriage and initiation customs. The final section contains a description of more recent changes brought about by the progressing integration with modern Cameroonian society, in 4.6.

### 4.1 Geographical setting: Adamaoua

The main area of the Nizaa is the subdivision (French: *arrondissement*) of Galim-Tignère in the division (French : *departement*) of Faro and Deo, in the province of Adamaoua. The map in Fig. 4.3 on page 95 shows the departmental division of the provinces. In the Faro and Deo division, Galim-Tignère covers the south-western part, bordering on Nigeria in the West, on the subdivisions of Mayo Baleo in the North, and Tignère in the North-East and East. Southwards it borders on the divisions of Djerem and Mayo Banyo. There are a few Nizaa villages in the Tignère subdivision, and in the division of Djerem. Another group has settled in northern Mayo Banyo division in the Sambolabbo area. Some Nizaa have also moved away on a more individual basis, especially those who have taken some sort of higher education. Such elite groups can be found in several larger cities of Cameroon.

Another way to describe the Nizaa area is as a rough rectangle: starting in the north-east corner by the mountain Hosséré Djinga 15 km north-east of Tignère the northern border strikes about 100 km westward across the Tchabal Mbabo massive to the Nigerian border. The eastern boundary goes southwards from Hosséré Djinga about 80 km to the village of Djombi, passing by the village of Minim (at about 30 km east of Doualayel, which serves as an important crossroads). From the South-eastern corner of Djombi, the southern border goes north-west to the Nigerian border again, which then forms the western boundary of the Nizaa area (Endresen 1992)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>Endresen mentions the possibility of Nizaa groups across the border in Nigeria, but thinks this

#### 4.1. GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING: ADAMAOUA



Figure 4.1: The chefferie in Galim. Entrance facing the plaza.



Figure 4.2: The Lamidos of Galim. Mural in His Majesty Hayatou's private garden.

It is difficult to estimate the size of the Nizaa population, at least until the results from the census in 2005 are ready. The number 10 000, based on the census in 1987, is often cited, but they are probably more numerous today, nearly 20 years later. All the villages have grown, but not exclusively Nizaa have swelled their ranks, other people also have come to live there. Still, if I should venture a guess, I think that 15 000 will be closer to the truth.

### Environment

The Adamawa<sup>3</sup> plateau is a vast highland plateau stretching across the border from Nigeria and right across Cameroon to the border of the Central African Republic. The mean elevation of much of the Cameroonian part of this area is about 1100 m. The mountain ranges of the Cameroonian dorsal rise up from the highlands in a line stretching from the South-West province through the high plateaus of the North-West and crossing over onto the Adamawa plateau. One of the highest areas is the Tchabal Mbabo massive which lies within the Nizaa area to the North-West. It is a large grassy tableland<sup>4</sup> with a high point of 2460m. North and westwards it dips rather abruptly down to the plains of Dodeo and Mayo Baleo, core area of the Pere people. These plains continue northwards into the great Benue basin which adjoins most of the northward side of the Adamaoua plateau and continues westward into Nigeria. South and east the Tchabal Mbabo slopes down to the general altitudes of the Adamawa plateau: the village of Wogomdou in the foothills of the high plateau is situated at about 1300 m, while Galim lies at an altitude of just over 1000 m.

The Tchabal Mbabo is aptly called the 'water-tower' of Cameroon. Several rivers originate in the Tchabal Mbabo massive and an important watershed lies within the Galim area. The Faro river (locally called Paro) belongs to the Niger river basin. It crosses the plateau northwards, joining other rivers and flowing north along the border with Nigeria, before it meets the great Benue river further north. Finally its waters flow into in the Niger flood and reach the sea in Nigeria. The Meng, on the other hand, belongs to the Atlantic basin. Locally named first Mayo Garbaya, then Mayo Beli, it flows southwards and reaches the sea south of Douala, by way of the Djerem river flowing into the Sanaga. The river Mbam also flows southwards from the Western Mbabo massive, and drains into the Sanaga south of its conjunction with the Djerem.

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unlikely, though not definitively ruled out.

<sup>3</sup>I am here adopting the somewhat established usage of using *Adamawa* of the larger historical and geographical entity, and *Adamaoua* of the smaller administrative entity of Cameroon (Boutrais 1993a).

<sup>4</sup>The fulfulde word *caɓɓal* means 'high grasslands, good pastures' (Boutrais 1995-96, vol.1, p.5-8)

4.1. GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING: ADAMAOUA

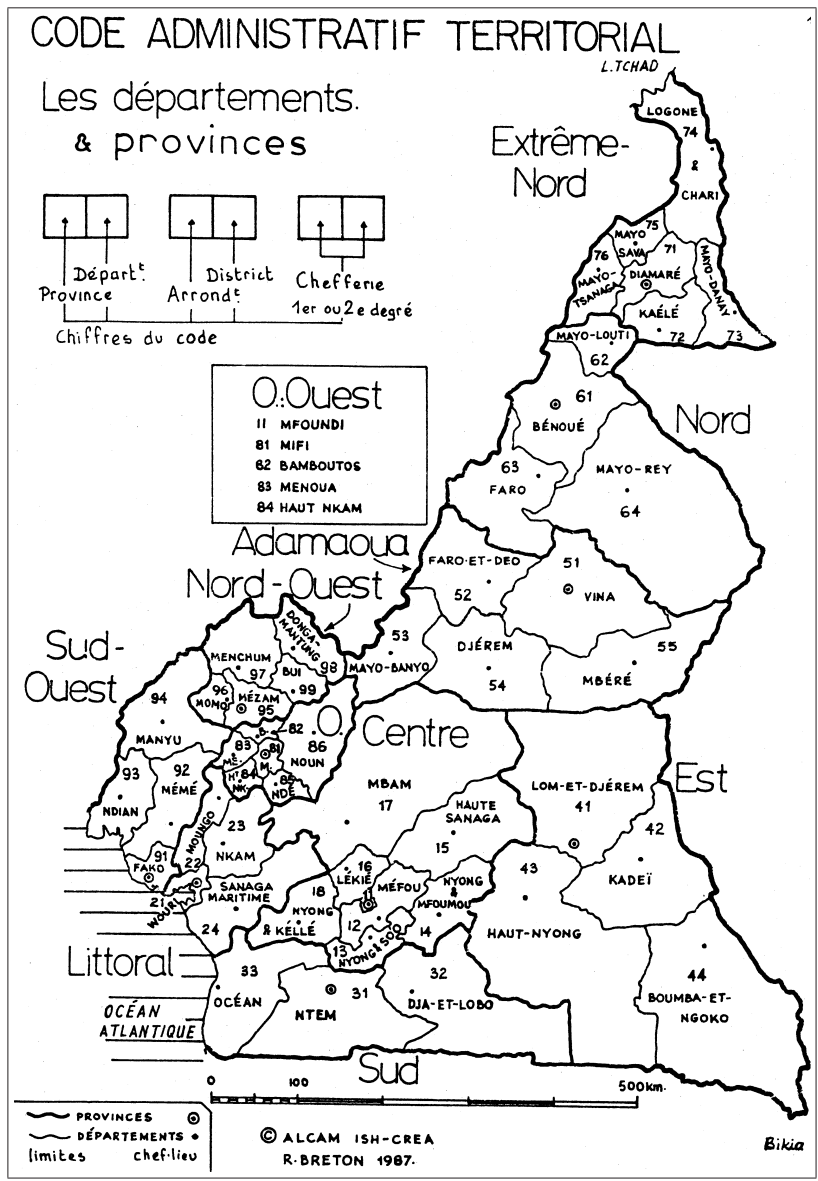


Figure 4.3: Provinces and departments of Cameroon

The whole Galim-Tignère subdivision is marked by the many criss-crossing rivers and valleys coming down from the heights of Mbabo. The terrain is convoluted, each larger valley having a host of smaller vales descending into it with tributaries to its river. In contrast to the treeless heights of above 1300 m, most of the area is of the bush savanna vegetation type: fairly open vegetation of bushes and small trees, with denser forestation along the water courses. The rivers are severe obstacles to travelling in rainy season, unless roads with proper bridges are built, and may even so create problems by washing out the bridges or breaking them.

The Nizaa now have their fields mainly on the meadows along the rivers, using the fertile ground here. The gallery forests adjoining the water courses are often cut down as well, to obtain new spaces for agriculture. Before the Fulbe disturbances of the nineteenth century, the Nizaa lived also on the high plateaus of Mbabo, and Hoosere Djinga near Tignère. It is their ancient cultivation of African finger millet (petit mil) and the *Coleus* tuber (in Nizaa *gwàà*) on these mountain prairies which cleared away the shrubbery and created the grasslands later exploited by nomadic Fulbe as pastures (Boutrais 1995-96, 1107). The grassgrown highlands are now left to them and their cattle drifts in a fairly unique arrangement of tiered exploitation (Boutrais 1993a).

During the last 200 years, both agriculture and cattle raising have profoundly shaped both the environment and the local way of life (Boutrais 1993a). The wild fauna have slowly retreated before the pressure of cattle breeding. Lions and other large predators are more or less extinct, elephants and buffalos are gone. Some kinds of antilopes are much hunted and probably dwindling, while warthogs and monkeys have proliferated. The warthogs are not allowed as food for moslems, and thus less ardently hunted by the newly Islamised nizaa. This is part of the problem of tse-tse-fly infestations, because these insects have warthogs as hosts (Boutrais 1995-96, p. 1144-1146). The trypanosomiasis disease have consequently been very difficult to eradicate on the Adamoua plateau lands, earlier praised as a very healthy area for cattle.

## 4.2 Historical setting

The Adamawa plateau has been settled for a long time, though much of its history is lost in the depths of time. Still, oral traditions and archeological evidence can give us some information on its past. It seems to have been an area of migratory movements for hundreds of years, with several peoples arriving from an easterly direction and others from the North or the West. In some cases such as the Mbum, there may have been ancient contact eastwards to the Nile valley through the interior Sudan, through Darfur and Kordofan (Eyongetah &

## 4.2. HISTORICAL SETTING

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Brain 1974, Bah 1993, p. 66).

The Mbum culture in the Adamawa is possibly centuries older than e.g. the Vute and the Gbaya, or the Nizaa, and present fairly well structured political units with high chiefs invested with both political and religious powers. As for early migratory movements, Eldridge 1991 point to the invasions of a people he names the *Bare-Tchamba* in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century, as directly pertaining to the Nizaa (and their neighbours, the Vute and the Kwanja) (Eldridge 1991, vol. 2: 7, 32-35). Also called simply Chamba<sup>5</sup>, they were a people of mounted warriors pushing south and east from northern Nigeria (Blench 1991, p. 31). Their invasion may have been the factor originally establishing the Nizaa in the locations where the Fulbe expansions found them decades later.

The Fulbe people were pastoralists who had slowly migrated through the grasslands eastwards from their original homeland in Futa Tooro (present day Senegal), always seeking good pastures and favorable conditions for their cattle flocks. By the end of the eighteenth century there were a large number of settlements in northern Nigeria and Cameroon. Though each migrating band was fairly independent of other groups, they shared the Fulfulde language and many cultural traits, and they had strong clan loyalties. They had converted to Islam earlier, and at this time some of the best Muslim scholars or *modibbe* in West Africa were Fulbe (Njeuma 1989, p. 2-3).

### 4.2.1 The empire of Usman dan Fodio

At the beginning of the 19th century important events took place which still shape much of present day Cameroon: A new wave of migratory unrest began, this time declenched by an expansion of Fulbe groups seeking to spread Islam to the pagan peoples. It was an important factor in the development of the Nizaa, and it still has a strong influence on the daily lives of the Nizaa and other groups.

In 1804, the Fulfulde empire of Sokkoto was established by Usman dan Fodio (1754-1817), (Hodgkin 2007). It came about as a result of a strong movement in northern Nigeria, aiming to cleanse Islam from pagan practices. This took the form of a *jihad*, a holy war, of which dan Fodio was the leader. It swept over much of West Africa, and united the large numbers of pastoralist Fulbe groups already wandering through the Adamawa regions. These highlands were regularly used as transhumance territory in dry season when it offered better pasturage for the cattle. The previous migrations eastward and southward into the Adamawa had not primarily been to proselytise for Islam, rather it was simply a question of seeking prosperity (Njeuma 1993). This changed with the *jihad*

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<sup>5</sup>Tchamba and Chamba are the French and English spellings of this ethnonym; Samba is also sometimes used.



movement. Where before the Fulbe pastoralists had delt on a family group basis with the abuses of power by sedentary groups, they now found a common will to resist, and a cause to fight for (Bah 1993).

The Fombina, or southern part of Usman dan Fodios empire, encompassed much of todays northern Nigeria and Cameroon. The plateau lands of Adamawa was a large part of this. It owes its name to the Islamic scholar Adama bi Ardo Hassana (1786-1847), or *moodibbo* Adama. He had studied both in Bornu and in Degel in northern Nigeria where Usman dan Fodio started his career as a Moslem reformer. He was chosen to go with a delegation of local Fulbe leaders in northern Nigeria to Sokoto. There he was given the standard of the *jihad* by dan Fodio in 1809: He was to spread Islam and establish Fulbe hegemony in the Fombina area (Encyclopedia Britannica Online 2007a).

Using military tactics learnt from the Hausa and the Bornuans, he and his successors succeeded in submitting most of this vast area to their control. The greatest military asset of the Fulbe expansion was the cavalry in chain mail, but their preference for fighting on horseback also meant that rugged mountain terrain offered some refuge for their opponents. Their expansion towards the south stopped at the beginning of the forested lowlands south of Adamaoua, an unhealthy climate for horses and cattle alike, because of the tse-tse-fly and dense forests (Bah 1993). They also met with more resolute and organised resistance from the western Bamenda chiefdoms (Njeuma 1989, p. 9).

Moodibbo Adama eventually established his capital in Yola in Nigeria on the shores of the Benue in 1841 (Encyclopedia Britannica Online 2007b).<sup>6</sup> In his capacity as emir of Yola he authorized the creation of more than 40 sub-emirates, or *lamidates* in the Fombina (Njeuma 1993, p.90). These were territorial units led by a *laamiido*, as opposed to the traditional leader called *ardo*, which designates a clan-leader. The lamidos of Ngaoundéré, Banyo, and Tibati were the most influential in our target area, seeking to dominate the pagan groups around them both by military conquest and by more political means. Ngaoundéré was established by the *ardo* Njobdi, and came to have close ties with the Mbum, eventually absorbing much of their culture. The Adamawa was penetrated by the 1830ies, but Fulbe take-overs of local power continued for another two decades. Banyo was conquered by Fulbe from Ngaoundéré in 1835 (Blench 1991). Both military conquests (e.g. the case of some Gbaya groups, such as the conquest of Koundé) and political alliances (e.g. the Mbum in several locations) served to further the goal of expanding Fulbe influence (Bah 1993, p.75-78). Around 1850 the area was largely 'pacified', with a notable exception in Galim, see 4.3.2 on page 105. All in all, an estimated territory of about 40 000 square miles and 1 500 000 inhabitants were under Fulbe control by the end of the nineteenth century

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<sup>6</sup>The year 1829 is given in Seignobos & Tourneux (2002, p.12).



## 4.2. HISTORICAL SETTING

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(Njeuma 1989, p. 9).

### **Impact of the Fulbe expansion in Adamoua**

Bah 1993 (p. 82-83) points out how the jihad in Adamawa fairly quickly changed into a more secular bid for dominance and economic exploitations by the Fulbe. There were not enough *moodiɓbe* (Coranic scholars) which could be nominated to leadership positions, and so the former clanleaders (the *ardo'en*) often continued as lamidos under the new system (Njeuma 1993, p.89). These leaders were not so strongly dedicated to purifying Islam, and they had a direct economic reason not to proselytise their pagan neighbours: it would hinder the taking of slaves from these groups (Njeuma 1989, p.10). There was a strong tendency for the larger lamidates to regard less subdued regions in their neighbourhood as a sort of 'private reserves' which could be raided for slaves when the need arose (Njeuma 1989, p. 10).

Instead Islam became a hallmark of the Fulbe aristocracy, and a prerequisite for individuals of other races trying to rise up through the ranks. Adherence to Islam was simultaneously an act of identification with the might and magnificence of the Fulbe lamido, and a way of legitimating a claim to power for chiefs of other ethnic origins (Bah 1993, Njeuma 1989, p. 15). These links between Islam and the lamidos have been steadily reinforced: it is difficult to conceive of a traditional chief who is not also a Moslem. There are examples of Christians converting to Islam to become elected as *jawros* or chiefs. It is thus no surprise that the lamidos of Galim have chosen to use Moslem symbols and names in their self-presentations, as we saw in Figs. 4.1 and 4.2 on page 93, see also 4.3.1 on page 103.

As noted above, the Fulbe expansion meant new migratory dynamics in the Adamawa area. Many groups fled southwards, to the extent that the Fulbe expansion may be seen as the most important factor in populating southern Cameroon (Encyclopedia Britannica Online 2007b). Of those who remained many moved to less exposed areas, while others were resettled in new places by the Fulbe rulers to serve in regular agricultural slavecolonies, (*ruumnde*, pl. *duumde*), (Njeuma 1989, p. 15-16). Politically, the pressure of a strong and aggressive people also forced groups traditionally less organised to draw together and form more tightly knit political units to defend themselves (Bah 1993, p.79-80).

The power of the Fulbe aristocracy was not without limits, though. While a lamido was strong near the center of his lamidate, his power could be quite diluted towards the borders of his territory, where he ruled more through intermediaries and local chiefs. Still, it was the institutions of the Fulbe administration which prevailed: several villages each lead by a *jawro*, grouped in a territory headed by a lamido, who again acknowledged the suzerainty of one of the great lamidos,

such as Tibati or Ngaoundéré. These finally answered to Yola, at least nominally, and Yola answered in principle to Sokoto. The Fulbe symbols of power such as the turban of office, horses, sword and ceremonial clothes were spread as well, given to the appointed jawro when he was invested (Bah 1993, p. 82)<sup>7</sup>.

The administrative apparatus revolved around the lamido. He was personally responsible both for enforcing Koranic law and for taking all important decisions. He appointed his associates and advisors and could expect them to show strong personal loyalty towards him. He would strengthen his ties to them by gifts such as arms, horses, richly embroidered robes, red caps, carpets and religious books. They would extend such patron-client relations to others again, making personal networks of influence and acting as intermediaries between the population and the lamido. The titles and functions of the court (the *faada*) were taken from both the Borno and the Hausa system, the Hausa titles being comparatively more used in Adamawa (Njeuma 1989, p. 12-15). By way of the close alliance between the lamido of Ngaoundéré and the Mbum, some of the Mbum trappings and customs of royalty became part of the royal ceremonial set up (Bah 1993).

The Fulbe expansion also meant an important boost to trade. Where before few long distance trade links existed, only small scale exchange of goods and services among neighbouring peoples, new ties with far off places such as Sokoto completely changed trade patterns. A new group of traders also established themselves in the area, mostly Hausa, but also Bornuan, Choa and even Egyptian or Tripoli Arabic (Bah 1993, p.78). Especially the Hausa traders soon formed self-sustaining settlements in the lamidates, becoming intermediate centres for the collection, purchase and reselling of goods (Njeuma 1989, p. 17). The opening up of new markets stimulated production in the local populations. The custom of tribute payments had a similar effect. By giving tributes to their superiors, subordinate rulers showed their friendship and respect of authority. It was not based in Moslem taxation rules, but it gained a religious significance by being used to sustain the efforts of the *jihad*. Sometimes the goal of military expeditions were simply to get hitherto unallied groups to enter into a tribute paying relation to a lamido, becoming a stable source of income (Njeuma 1989, p. 9).

Several kinds of trade goods flowed along the trade routes opened by the new communication lines linking the lamidates. Slaves were one important commodity, acquired both by tribute payments and by raiding of pagan populations. An estimated 5000 slaves were brought to the emir in Yola in 1851 as annual tribute from the Fombina lamidates. Other wares were gum arabic, sesame seeds, rubber, natron, meat, raw hides and skins, kola nuts and ivory, given in

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<sup>7</sup>This organisation still exists on the lower levels, with village jawros being appointed by the lamido. The system has been expanded to larger villages and cities, with jawros leading city districts. The links to Yola in present day Nigeria have of course disappeared, to be replaced by the Cameroonian government which appoints the lamidos of 'first degree'.

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exchange for salt, beads, English and Indian cotton cloth, and, towards the end of the nineteenth century, steadily more British manufactured goods (Njeuma 1989, p. 22).

All these changes brought about by the Fulbe *jihad* movement also brought about real cultural transformations in the area. These were most strongly felt in the urban centers like Ngaoundéré, Garoua and Yola, however, while the rural areas often could carry on their customs as before. Some more well-organised groups, such as the Mbum and the Vute, managed to keep their own traditional structures while acknowledging Fulbe overlordship and paying tribute. Islam did not at first profoundly change the religious practices, it was rather a thin veneer on previous religions. Clothing was one thing that changed, though: where before only a small cache-sexe was enough, now cotton boubous and skullcaps became customary for men to use (Bah 1993, p. 85).

Perhaps the most important change was the introduction of Fulfulde as a lingua franca.<sup>8</sup> It was used in the armies, in inter-ethnic communications and trade, and was a necessary asset to gain political influence, more so than a strict adherence to Islam (Njeuma 1989, p.21). It was an agent of acculturation and cohesion by carrying terms for many of the novelties brought by the Fulbe, such as the administrative apparatus, the practices of social etiquette and the many new objects (Bah 1993, p.84).

### 4.2.2 The European take-over: Cameroon today

European traders had worked the coasts of West-Africa for hundreds of years already, but in 1884 a new situation arose: in the so-called 'Scramble for Africa', England, France and Germany practically divided the African continent between themselves. The definition of new colonies were based on the already existing 'spheres of influence'. Without going into the fairly convoluted details (see e.g. (Eyongetah & Brain 1974, Njeuma 1989)), Germany came to have jurisdiction over Cameroon, making their influence felt in the hinterland from about 1899, when among others Banyo and Tibati were conquered (Blench 1991).

The German idea of colonial rule is summed up in the word 'protectorate'. Their aim was to develop trade and profits by leaving the local chief in place to rule his territory, while maintaining a notion of their own presence (Abwa 1989, p. 150). But they had no qualms about using brute force to establish themselves if

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<sup>8</sup>The use of Fulfulde as lingua franca must not be overemphasized, though, as it was not the only such language of the area. It was e.g. the Mbum language, not the Fulfulde, which was chosen as main working language by the Norwegian missionaries in Adamaoua in the 1930s. Fulfulde was felt to be too closely and negatively associated with Islam, and Mbum was just as well understood by most of the non-Fulbe groups (Lode 1990, p.54-55).

necessary, and opposition was rewarded with punitive expeditions, some of which hit the Nizaa.

During World War I the German holdings in Cameroon were taken by French and British forces, and after the war the Cameroons became a mandate of the League of Nations (1922). The Western parts were ruled by the British as a part of Nigeria, while France took care of the eastern provinces. Adamaoua fell under the French administrated area. Their handling of the area showed a curious balance between the preferred 'direct rule' most often employed in the French colonies, and a need for accommodating the Fulbe lamidos and use their hold on the population to the advantage of the French administration. This meant a policy of supervision and fragmentation of the power of the lamidos, while also granting them the external symbols of power (Abwa 1989).

The League of the Nations' mandate continued under the United Nations umbrella after World War II, and Cameroon became a trusteeship under Great Britain and France. Independence came in 1961 and 1960 respectively for the British and the French parts. After a plebiscite, the northern parts of the western provinces chose to belong to Nigeria, while the southern parts chose Cameroon. These areas became today's North-West and South-West provinces, and formed one of the states in the new confederate state of Cameroon. The former French area formed the other state. In 1972 the Federal Republic of Cameroon was changed constitutionally to the United<sup>9</sup> Republic of Cameroon. The Republic of Cameroon has been officially bilingual from its beginnings, using both French and English for administrative purposes.

### 4.3 The Nizaa

Turning now from the larger sweep of events to the Nizaa people in particular, we saw that they consider their lamidate to have been founded in 1765, before the Fulbe expansions. I have not been able to ascertain exactly what data this year is based on, but probably it comes from a reckoning backwards of the names of former lamidos and chiefs known from oral traditions. A different clue to the history of the Nizaa lies in the fact that their language is akin to the Vute language spoken today by people south and south west of them (Vute, also to some extent Kwanja, Wawa and Mambila). The Vute inhabit the southern part of Djerem division in Adamaoua, and a large part of the province of Centre. A dialect even closer to Nizaa is spoken in the Mayo Banyo division. The relations between the Vute and the Nizaa are noted in the oral traditions of the Nizaa: they speak of meeting a Vute group, the *Jimgbaawi* when migrating into the area from their

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<sup>9</sup>The word 'United' was dropped in 1984.

### 4.3. THE NIZAA

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origin in the North (Eldridge 1991, p.17). This linguistic relation with groups to the south is quite striking in view of the fact that the Nizaa claim to originate in the Bibemi division in the North province, about 500 km away. It may be worthwhile to note that the Vute seem to have similar stories of origins in the North (closer to Lake Tchad) and then wandering first into Nigeria before entering Adamawa from the West (Bah 1993, p. 68).

It is hard to unravel the 'real facts' of the origins of the Nizaa, and maybe not very useful: what counts here is rather their own view of who they are.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.3.1 Origin traditions of the Nizaa

The Nizaa have a number of origin traditions which speak of their migrating to their present area from the North. Of these traditions, there exist at least two versions. Eldridge 1991 describes how he in his fieldwork in Galim in 1983 was presented with one based on an adjamia manuscript written by the notable Wadjiri Bakariwa in 1941, and with another recorded on a audiocassette from 1965 by the ex-lamido Mohammadou Diallo Hamadina. The last one is striving to give a Moslem identity to the first chief of the line, and cite more or less Moslem names for all the subsequent chiefs (Eldridge 1991, p. 19). It is this version which is cited in wan Hayatou's mural, see Fig. 4.2 on page 93.

The place cited as their origin is Bibemi on the Mayo Kebbi east of Garoua in the North Province. A people called Nyam-nyam is known to have lived there, but they were thoroughly submitted by the Fulbe later on and were completely assimilated by the beginning of the twentieth century. They are supposed to have called themselves *bári* or *ní-mbári* (Eldridge 1991). It is difficult to know if these Nyam-nyam have a direct link to the Nyem-nyem of Galim, not the least because this ethnonym was applied to a number of peoples in the old interior Soudan: it was generally pejoratively used of animistic groupes by those already islamised (Eldridge 1991, p. 14).

The stories of the Nizaa concerning Bibemi seems to speak mostly of the first chief, wan *Túkúm Rîcùn* (Littérature Nizaa 1997, Jawro Umáru Wogomdou)<sup>11</sup>, and how he led the migration to Galim-Tignère. In the other version he chooses to leave because his brother by a Fulbe wife of his father was preferred to inherit the chieftaincy. It is possible that these traditions in either versions pertains only to the family who later became chiefs in Galim, rather than to all the ancestors of the Nizaa of today. But with a date as early as 1765 for the start of the royal dynasty, these quarrels are placed in a time before the great thrust to create Fulbe

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<sup>10</sup>The discussion of the ethnogenesis and history of some Mambiloïd groups in Zeitlyn & Connell (2003) shows just how complex such origin traditions and linguistic connections can be in the area under question.

<sup>11</sup>Wan Tukuri Cun according to the spelling of (Eldridge 1991)

lamidates, cfr. 4.2.1 on page 97. Have memories of strife with that other group, the Chamba, been mingled with the more recent expansion of the Fulbe? Are the Bári or Ní-mbári of Bibemi identic with the Chamba? Could one part of this group have migrated under the double name of Bari and Nyam-nyam? Are the Peere in the plains around Mayo Baleo north of Tchabal Mbabo also part of this people, while the Nyem-nyem in Galim took over their other name?

This is the hypothesis given by Eldridge (1991), basing his views on extensive collections of oral traditions among all the ethnic groups concerned. A group which he calls the Bare-Chamba came from the North and via the Nigerian plain of Benue. They entered present-day Adamoua by the plain around Mayo Baleo, left their name in the form of *Peere* there, and ascended the plateau. Around Tignère they encountered an indigenous group called in Mbum traditions *Súgà*, *Súgwà* or *Sígwà*<sup>12</sup>. This word he supposes is related to the ethnonym Nizaa, which he renders as *Zǝǝ*<sup>13</sup>. Again some shall have stayed and founded a royal dynasty, while the rest pressed on to establish the chiefdoms of Banyo and Tibati, and other kingdoms further South (Bali-Nyonga) (Eldridge 1991, p. 14-15, 32-35).

While Eldridge's wide knowledge of the oral traditions concerned is indisputable, his use of ethnonyms and linguistic data is much less convincing. For one thing, the Chamba language is an Adamawa language while the Vute and the Nizaa are so-called bantoid/ mambiloïd languages (see 4.4 on page 108), so the linguistic distance is fairly large. What remains concerning the Nizaa is the possibility that some smaller group may have had their origin in Bibemi and merged with a group already present in Galim, and taking up their language, which was close to Vute. It is rather less likely that this small group spoke Chamba, or another Adamawan language. The Nizaa traditions indicate that there was more than one wave of migrations, but that the different waves were related (Mama 1994, p. 22). The traditions speak of them as having the same language: At one point the clan of Nàw 'Bona', who had established themselves on the Jim mountain, heard of newcomers (the people of wan Túkúm Rîicùn) in Woori. They were then surprised to find that they spoke a language similar to their own.

In any case the idea of having come from Bibemi is firmly entrenched with the Nizaa, and there are a number of stories telling of episodes along the way. They claim to have gone first westwards and then south into the lands of the Bata, the Chamba and the Jukun and then into the present-day Adamoua by way of

<sup>12</sup>This ethnonym may also be related to the Peere word *súgò* 'non-Peere' (Raen 1981, p. 84), cited in (Endresen 1990/1991).

<sup>13</sup>According to general rules for writing Cameroonian languages, this spelling means a nasalised vowel, which is an inaccurate rendering of the ethnonym. His indiscriminate cutting off of the first syllable *ni-* on a number of ethnonyms under the pretext that this is a prefix meaning 'people (les gens)' (Eldridge 1991, p. 35) also seems unnecessary.

#### 4.3. THE NIZAA

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Tchabal Mbabo. From this time of wandering come a certain ‘cousin’ (*bàbri*) relation with some other groups, such as the Bata, the Chamba, the Daka, the Jukun, the Mbum and the Vute Mgbaa (Eldridge 1991).

Having ascended to the Adamaoua by way of Tchabal Mbabo, they lived on the Tchabal Mbabo, on the plateau of Tignère and on the Hoosere Djinga some kilometers east of Tignère. They also stayed in the plain of Woori, or Ngouri, north of Galim of today, for a long period of time. The clan of the royal Nizaa dynasty has its name from this place, they are called the *Nàw Woori*.

##### 4.3.2 Resistance traditions

Three more chiefs reigned before rumours of trouble with Fulbe invaders made them take refuge in the Jim mountain close to Galim. Their names in the older version are wan *Bùm Woori*, *Wògcùn*, and wan *lǝgù*.<sup>14</sup> The more moslem version of wan Hamadina cites an extra chief, between wan *Túkúm Rífcùn* and wan *Bùm*. Their names can be seen in Fig. 4.2 on page 93 as noted above.

Then in the time of fourth wan, wan *lǝgù*, rumours of the Fulbe expansion came and in the time of *Gàlím*, the fifth chief, those living on the heights of Mbabo and in the river valleys moved to the Jim mountain just west of the present village of Galim (Eldridge 1991, p. 24). Unlike the gentler slopes of Mbabo, this mountain was difficult to attack for a mounted force and much easier to defend (Boutrais 1995-96, p. 1107). Here they developed a system of watch posts and espionage which served them well in the subsequent conflicts with much more heavily armed Fulbe and German forces.

The second Fulbe lamido of Tibati was Hamadou Nyamboula, he became lamido in 1848. In 1856 he seized Tignère and the neighbouring areas, but the Nizaa of Galim refused to acknowledge his authority. Nyamboula was not able to cross the line of demarcation which the Nizaa chief had made below the mountain, it was well defended. He tried again in 1865 with a large force of one thousand mounted warriors, but was completely defeated in a surprise attack. He later died from his wounds in Tibati (Mama 1994, p. 39-40). During the next 30 years, each new lamido of Tibati tried to bring the Nizaa to heel, without succes (Boutrais 1995-96, p.1107). Wan *Gàlím* was succeeded by wan *Máŋcùn*, who reigned till 1878, when the renowned *Njómna* took over.

From the 1870s, a new vave of immigration began: nomadic Fulbe of the Jafun<sup>15</sup> group began to settle in the area. They were drawn both by the natron sources in Galim and in Falkoumre closer to Tignère, and by the now more or less

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<sup>14</sup>These names have the following forms in Eldridge (1991, 24): wan *Bùm Wǝǝrí*, *Wòpcùn*, and *Ngú*, but these are clearly wrong. The forms used in the text above are based on my own research and the standard spelling of Nizaa.

<sup>15</sup>Djafoun in French, see Boutrais (1995-96)

empty lands around Tignère and Galim. They were first installed in Tignère by the lamido of Tibati, but were chased away by the Fulbe there by the end of the nineteenth century. Tibati gave them another base in Lompta, 7 km from Galim and the waters of its natron source. But they were constantly harassed by the Nizaa who regarded them as the minions of Tibati, and their cattle flocks as a convenient source of meat (Boutrais 1993a, p. 36).

During this phase it seems the Nizaa developed into a constant threat to the surrounding groups, and to trading caravans passing by. They raided nearby villages of the Vute and Fulbe, stealing away women and children to augment their ranks. The harassment of profitable occupations such as trade and cattle raising attracted the attention of the Germans who had a post in Banyo from 1899. From 1902 on there are several rapports in Banyo of caravans having been plundered when going north from Guenderou through Sambolabbo to Dodeo west of Tchabal Mbabo. A German punitive expedition against the Nyem-Nyem of Galim took place in 1902, setting fire to the village of Galim at the foot of the mountain, while the population took refuge in their caves above.

A larger expedition came late in 1906 and camped just south of the present village of Galim. The Nizaa having seen the camp fires from their mountain watch posts, arranged a nightly surprise attack, killed a number of German soldiers and seized their fire arms. The Germans bombarded the mountain in retaliation, without being able to shake out the Nizaa. They then came with an even larger force enforced with troops from several lamidates besides the old enemy in Tibati. This time they started a regular siege, besides attacking the mountain with artillery and trying to smoke the Nizaa out of the caves where they hid. They also tried the old siege weapon of famine, burning the fields around the mountain. But to no avail: the Nizaa managed to resist the military attacks for years, till they were finally saved by the French and British take over in 1915 (Mama 1994, p. 42-44).

Wan Njomna led the resistance fights against the Fulbe-German alliance. He used guerilla warfare tactics and spies in a very sagacious way to achieve his succesful resistance, but there is no doubt that the Nizaa suffered much during the last siege. Their numbers dwindled, not only from warfare as such, but because people gave up, rounded up their family and fled to more peaceful locations.

Njomna tried after 1900 to enlist the support of the emir of Yola by sending his younger brother *Lim* to him, asking him to stop the aggression from the Fulbe lamido of Tibati. Lim was endowed with a mission to islamise his people and changed his name to Alim Yola, but the emir had no real power by then to curb the activites of Tibati (Mama 1994, p. 71).



##### 4.3.3 Settling in Galim

Alim was taken captive during the siege, and sent to Banyo. He was thus present when French forces took Banyo in October 1915. He was sent back to Galim and told his elder brother of the war between different white peoples and how he had been freed by the French. This paved the way for a meeting between Njomna and a French officer. Njomna was persuaded to leave the mountain and take up residence in Galim and start a new life. The French gave him 100 heads of cattle and guaranteed the safety of the Nizaa. They later set up a post in Galim as a show of protection (Mama 1994, p. 43).

Njomna died in 1919, and Alim Yola became the new wan, reigning till 1934. The French authorities succeeded in calming the situation and stopping aggressive behaviour in the area, both from the Tibati side and from the Nizaa. From the 1920s the Jafun nomads started pasturing their cattle on the high grasslands of Mbabo, while consolidating their settlement in Lompta (Boutrais 1993a, p. 37). The Nizaa themselves have not wanted to take up high altitude agriculture again, they have rather chosen the riverside valleys and plains for their agricultural activities.

Of the many autochthonous groups in the Adamaoua, the Nizaa alone never succumbed to Fulbe expansions. But in the decades following the fighting on Jim, they have not been able to escape the general cultural and religious transformation unifying all the ethnic groups in the Adamaoua. The installation of Bornu and Hausa groups in Galim from the 1920s put Islamic practices before their eyes. There was also the strong connection between being a lamido and being Moslem, which served to legitimate claims to power, see 4.2.1 on page 99. Wan Mohammadou Diallo Hamadina started a more definite Islamisation process with his reign from 1956 till 1961. The old religious practices have been steadily declining, while Moslem customs of clothing, eating and drinking, fasting and praying etc. have become more and more prevalent.

The agricultural practices have changed as well: while the preferred crops used to be finger millet and sorghum, a change to maize took place in the 50s and 60s. The millet was grown on rises between rivers, with a regular rotation with *yom* grass (*Tephrosia vogelii*) to fertilise the soil. The transhumance practices of the nomadic Fulbe made this system difficult. They descended with their flocks in the beginning of the dry season to find greener pastures along the river valleys. But the millet matures late, and so the millet fields were often severely damaged by passing herds, together with the fields sown with *yom*. Maize has a shorter growth cycle of only 4 months so that the harvest was finished before the descent of the cattle herds.

An interdependency has come into existence in this area: the nomadic Fulbe need the Nizaa and other agricultural peoples so that they can buy the cereals

needed to live in the high altitudes with their cattle. They are also allowed to pasture their flocks in the already harvested maize fields, easing the strain on dry season pasturelands. The Nizaa have got an outlet for their produce and profit from the flocks staying in their fields after the harvest since they leave manure and fertilise the soil in this way. Still, there is no denial that the presence of pastoralists has strongly influenced the old Nizaa way of living (Boutrais 1995-96, p.1145).

#### **Traditions and Identity**

As we have seen, the Nizaa have clear ideas of having taken over their present lands after having originated somewhere else. This does not mean, however, that they consider themselves as somehow strangers in their land, while truly belonging in Bibemi. Rather, their resourcefulness on their long wanderings and later settlement is a source of pride to them: they have earned their present location. That sentiment is of course only strengthened by their experiences of successfully fighting against the Fulbe and German armies. The stories of old times, complete with genealogies linking the past to people living today, serve to anchor the Nizaa as a distinct people with a history to be proud of. Their existence as a group apart is based on this history, on their lamidate led by their own wan, and on their language.

### **4.4 A language group in the Adamaoua**

We have had a glance at the general history of Adamaoua and at the history of the Nizaa more specifically. The process of the Fulbe expansion is a large part of the explanation for the linguistic setting in which we find the Nizaa of today, which is the theme of this section.

A glance at the linguistic atlas of Cameroon shows how diverse this country is linguistically. The SIL website (SIL 2006) cites 286 national languages in Cameroon. English and French are official languages, used in administration and schools, and the country is roughly divided in a large Eastern Francophone zone and a smaller Western Anglophone zone. In a population of about 17 million (CIA 2006, Oct 2007)<sup>16</sup>, the high number of languages means that many linguistic groups are small. No single African language covers the whole country, though Fulfulde is extensively used as a lingua franca in the three northern provinces. In the southern parts of the country Pidgin, Ewondo and Beti-Basaa are the most important lingua francas (Breton & Fohntung 1991). French and English are also fast attaining lingua franca status in these areas (Tabi-Manga 2000). The

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<sup>16</sup>The CIA World Factbook uses estimated numbers, since the latest available census was in 1987. A new census was held in November 2005, but the numbers are not yet ready (Oct 2007).

#### 4.4. A LANGUAGE GROUP IN THE ADAMAOUA

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Adamaoua province has at least 13 indigenous languages, in a population of about 700.000. See fig. 4.4 on the next page

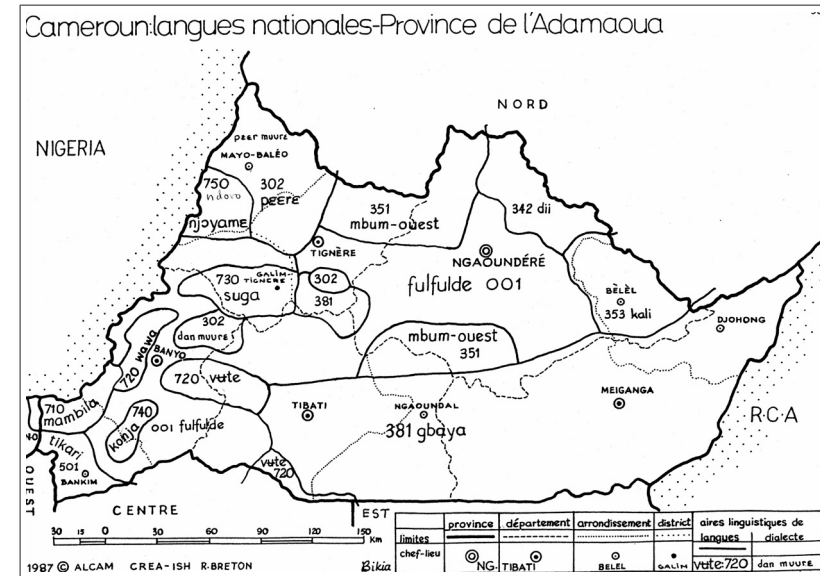
The Nizaa speak a language which is not readily understandable by most of their neighbours. The closest linguistic relative is a dialect of the Vute language as spoken by a group in the Mayo Banyo department westward. Both Vute and Nizaa are classified as mambiloïd languages under a Bantoïd subgroup of the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo language phylum (Breton & Fohtung 1991, p.18).

Directly surrounding the Nizaa are the Pere in the prefecture of Mayo Baleo to the north, and Gbaya settlements in the south-east area, both of these are Ubangui languages, while Mbum in the direction of Tignère eastward and to the South, is classified as an Adamawa lanugage. These three languages are grouped together in another branch of the Niger-congo phylum, the Adamawa-Ubangui-languages.

Several language groups are interspersed with the Nizaa in their area (Endresen 1999). In the chief village of Galim, sedentary groups of Fulbe together with a substantial group of Hausa and a group of Koolejo or Bornuans, each have their own quartier in the village, dating back to its founding in the 1920s (Leis 1970, p. 680). Hausa is a Chadic language of the Afro-Asiatic phylum, while the Bornuans speak Kanuri, a Saharan language of the Nilo-Saharan phylum. Fulfulde-speaking half nomadic Jafun and Akou are living among the Nizaa in more or less separated settlements. The Fulfulde language is classified as Atlantic, yet another branch of the Niger-Congo. Some Chamba families have been in Galim for generations, originally coming to work as herders for the sedentary Fulbe, their language is classified as Adamawa (Endresen 1999).

In modern Cameroon one also has to take into account the effects of social mobility: civil servants are assigned to work posts all over the country, bringing their languages and their families with them, and people migrate from their home area to find work or join relatives in other parts of the country. Lately so many Gbayas have settled in Galim that the lamido has designated a leader (jawro) for them, as for the other three groups with a longstanding presence in Galim. At any time one will find representatives of languages from all over Cameroon, though most of these are less stable inhabitants. There is also a certain influx of Nigerians, speaking Hausa and/or Fulfulde, and more or less English.

Apart from teachers and other public servants, people come for other kinds of work, such as mining. One recent example may serve as illustration: Quite recently a sapphire lode has been discovered some 50 km south of Galim. This has lead to an enourmous growth of the former minuscule village of Kossab. It used to have 5 or 6 familiy compounds, maybe 100 people altogether, but during my field work period in January 2006 it counted at least 2000 people, most of them living in temporary straw huts. A lively exchange of goods and services took places,



#### 4.4. A LANGUAGE GROUP IN THE ADAMAOUA

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1, the sedentary Fulbe and to some extent the Bornuans have Fulfulde as first language, while Hausa is their second language. The opposite situation obtains for the Hausa, though younger Hausa who have grown up in Galim and had Nizaa playmates may know some Nizaa as well. The Nizaa belonging with this upper stratum, will generally primarily use Fulfulde, taking a quite condescending stance towards their original first language. There is extensive intermarriage, which tend to favor the Fulfulde language.

Group 2 consists of Nizaa, Mbum, Vute and Chamba, what we may call ordinary people of the village. They will all know and use Fulfulde as second language and some will have Hausa as a third language. They may also know one or more of the other languages, if they are related to persons of the other groups by intermarriage, close friendships etc. People who went to the mission school in Galim in the 1950s usually know Mbum, as it was used in education at the time.

The nomadic Fulbe, often called Mbororos, form the third social group, with a generally lower standing which contradicts the fact that they actually may be wealthy: cattle raising is the money machine of the Adamaoua. But their way of living do not show this wealth, which is mostly tied up in cattle (Endresen 1999).

##### 4.4.1 Language description; orthographic conventions

The Nizaa and their language have traditionally been called Nyem-nyem or Nyam-nyam, a word probably coming from the Fulfulde word for 'eat', *nyaamdu*. This name is somewhat pejorative, and the Nizaa today try to get away from this ethnonym. The Nizaa themselves call their language *Nyani nízaà*, 'Nizaa speech'.<sup>17</sup> A standard orthography exists, based on the phonological analysis in Endresen's (1992) work, and my own work with the team of the Centre de Littérature Nizaa in the 1990s.<sup>18</sup>

##### Phonology

The Nizaa language has a comparatively complex phonology and tonology. I will present here only the most basic facts of vowels, consonants and tones.

There are three types of vowel phonemes, 5 short and oral, and 10 long and oral and 7 long and nasalised, see Tables 4.1 and 4.2 on the next page.

There are two major consonant systems, one for syllable onset containing 61 phonemes, and one for syllable coda containing 10 phonemes, see Tables 4.4

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<sup>17</sup>In the linguistic atlas of Cameroon the name is given as Suga, (Breton & Fohtung 1991), see also 4.3.1 on page 103.

<sup>18</sup>The 'Center of Nizaa Litterature' was part of an extensive language development project of the *Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne du Cameroun*, financed by the Norwegian aid agency (NORAD) with the Norwegian Mission Society as intermediary, and working with 16 different languages.

and 4.3 on the facing page. In the onset system, the two glottal stops are so marginal as to never be written in orthographic renderings of the language.<sup>19</sup> The large number of phonemes is due to an extensive doubling of consonants with rounded consonants.

Table 4.1: Short vowels

<i>Opening</i>	<b>Unrounded</b>	<b>Rounded</b>
<i>Close</i>	i [ i ɪ ]	u [ u ʊ ]
<i>Mid</i>	e [ e ɛ ]	o [ o ɔ ]
<i>Open</i>	a [ a ]	

Table 4.2: Long vowels, oral and nazalized

<i>Opening</i>	<b>Front unrounded</b>	<b>Back unrounded</b>	<b>Back rounded</b>
<i>Close</i>	ii [ i: ]	uu [ u: ]	uu [ u: ]
<i>Close-Mid</i>	ee [ e: ]	əə [ ɤ: ]	oo [ o: ]
<i>Open-Mid</i>	ɛɛ [ ɛ: ]	ɑɑ [ ʌ: ]	ɔɔ [ ɔ: ]
<i>Open</i>	aa [ a: ]		
	<b>Front unrounded</b>	<b>Back unrounded</b>	<b>Back rounded</b>
<i>Close</i>	īī [ ī: ]	ūū [ ū: ]	ūū [ ū: ]
<i>Open-Mid</i>	ɛ̄ɛ̄ [ ɛ̄: ]	ɑ̄ɑ̄ [ ʌ̄: ]	ɔ̄ɔ̄ [ ɔ̄: ]
<i>Open</i>	āā [ ʌ̄: ]		

#### 4.4.2 Tones

The Nizaa language has a rich tonology, with three distinctive tonelevels and a number of tone combinations used as lexical tones. There are also morphosyntactic and morphological tones, and tones are regularly transported in a systematic way. I will not give a full overview of the tone system here, but refer the reader to Endresen (1992). A certain understanding of how tones are marked may be useful, though.

In principle all tonemic tones are written, while phenomena such as downstep are not. Complex tone patterns are written with a combination of diacritics, so

<sup>19</sup>The only frequent items where these two phonemes appear, are the 3rd person plural pronoun of one dialect, but in standard orthography the form from another dialect is used, with *ḡ* and *ḡw* instead of glottal stops.

#### 4.4. A LANGUAGE GROUP IN THE ADAMAOUA

Table 4.3: Syllable coda consonants

Labial	Apical	Dorsal	Labio-dorsal
b [p, b ] m [m ]	d [t, d ] n [n ]	g [g] ŋ [ŋ ] y [j ]  r [r]	w [w ] ɣw [ɣ̃w ]

Table 4.4: Syllable onset consonants

Labial	Apical	Laminal	Dorsal	Labio-dorsal	Glottal
p [p ]	t [t ] tw [tʷ]	c [tʃ ] cw [tʃʷ]	k [k ] kw [kʷ]	kp [k̟p ]	[ʔ] [ʔʷ]
b [b ]	d [d ] dw [dʷ]	j [dʒ ] jw [dʒʷ]	g [g] gw [gʷ]	gb [g̟b ]	
ɓ [ɓ ] ɓw [ɓʷ]	ɗ [ɗ ] ɗw [ɗʷ]				
mb [mb ]	nd [nd ] ndw [ndʷ]	nj [ndʒ ] njw [ndʒʷ]	ŋg [ŋg ] ŋgw [ŋgʷ]	mgb [ŋm̟gb ]	
m [m ] mw [mʷ]	n [n ] nw [nʷ]	ny [ɲ] nyw [ɲʷ]	ŋ [ɲ̟] ŋw [ɲ̟ʷ]		
mv [ɲv ]		nz [nz ] nzw [nzʷ]			
f [f ] fw [fʷ]		s [s ] sw [sʷ] sh [ʃ ] shw [ʃʷ]	h [x ]		h [h ]
v [v ] vw [vʷ]	l [l ] lw [lʷ]	z [z ] zw [zʷ]	gh [ɣ ] y [j ] yw [ɣ̟j ]	w [w ]	
vb [β̞]	r [r ] rw [rʷ]				

that e.g. a High-Low tone will appear with a High and a Low tone mark, not the circumflex often used for this tone pattern. The writing apart of all tones entering a complex tone pattern is more economical as far as the number of tone glyphs is concerned, and it makes the tonetransport system more transparent. It is easier to grasp why a new tone, say a Low tone, appears on the first syllable of a word, if the preceding word has lost the Low tone it normally carries. As an example we may look at the particle introducing citations, *à*’, which has a L-H rising tone pattern. In many sentences, the High tone of this particle will be transported to the following word, making an unexpected High tone on the first syllable there, though this is not possible if the word has a Low tone first syllable.

## 4.5 Cultural traits of the Nizaa

From the historical, geographical and linguistic description of the previous sections, I will go on to describe some of the socio-cultural environment of the Nizaa as a contemporary cultural community with a number of cultural traits. People belonging to such a community will have various histories of engagement in its practices. The commonalities exist, there are many “intergenerationally conveyed concepts, ways of talking, and belief systems” (Gutiérrez & Rogoff 2003, p. 21), which will be used and negotiated locally within what can be defined as an ethnic group. Cultural traits exist, but it is important to see them not so much as individual traits directly indexed by an ethnic label such as Nizaa, as tendencies in the the larger context of the community.

In looking for the commonalities, for the cultural practices, we can use the physical surroundings, the organization of space, artifacts and objects, together with the social configuration of people, to understand something of the culture. Physical surroundings link with the timescales within which people live their lives, and both play a vital role in the description of the social practices of a cultural community (Scollon 2005).

I will start with the physical appearance of their villages, and then go on with the important subjects of family, of agriculture and of initiation, all pertaining to the category of childhood as a structural form of society (Corsaro 1997). In accordance with the goal professed in 3.2.2 of avoiding present-tense statements of what the Nizaa ‘are’ and ‘do’, I use my own observations of particular cases whenever I can, alongside more general statements.

### 4.5.1 Villages and settlements

Let us first have a look at how the Nizaa organize their villages. When arriving in most Nizaa villages, one will maybe first notice the fact that the village has a



#### 4.5. CULTURAL TRAITS OF THE NIZAA

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center: the place in front of the *jawro*'s compound. The *jawro*, or village chief, is often called *táá gbiij*, 'the father of the village', and in many cases, a Nizaa village has started out as a single family compound headed by one man, which then has sprouted into several more compounds as sons and other male relatives have joined in.

The *jawro* settles minor disputes in the area under his jurisdiction, and takes care of matters concerning the whole village, such as visits from the *sous-préfet* or other civil servants, vaccination campaigns and the celebration of national holidays.

On several occasions while I worked in the Nizaa language project, I called village meetings by writing a letter to the *jawro* beforehand and asking him to convene a meeting on a certain date and time. These meetings were always held in the *jawro*'s *pòò* or entrance house, on the specified date, but rarely at the specified time. If a great number of people were present, they were held on the plaza outside. I have also attended parents' meetings in the *jawro*'s *pòò* in the little village of Mipom, while such meetings were held at the schools in Galim. On such occasions of public meetings, only men were present, the women would at most listen by the door or behind the fences of the nearest compound. On the occasion of a vaccination campaign in Mipom, however, it was rather the women who brought their children to have a vaccination shot there.

The plaza outside also serves for important public occasions, such as the school children's parade for the National Youth Day on 11th February or the National Day on 20th May. The *jawro*'s compound is in principle maintained by the population, and they work for him on the fields, which is one of the benefits of being a *jawro*. During my stay in Mipom the *jawro*'s *pòò* was knocked down and rebuilding was started: the old one was getting leaky and the little verandah in front was in constant danger of collapsing. Several men of the village worked on this project. The *jawro* also had plans of constructing a guesthouse in this compound, when the entrance house was finished. He himself had his own private compound close by, this was maintained by himself.

In most villages the little plaza in front of the *jawro*'s entrance house will be flanked by a mosque as well, and there will be a few shops. In a larger village such as Wogomdou or Galim itself, there is another market some way off from this central place. From the plaza, streets will lead off in several directions, bordered by family compounds enclosed by *seekos*, mats plaited from high grass, or woven raphia mats, as seen e.g. in fig. 4.5 on the next page. The posts supporting these fences will be a special kind of tree which takes root, so an older and well established compound will have a row of small trees along its fence, see Fig. 4.7 on page 119. If the owner can afford it, he will build mudbrick walls covered with straw thatch on the top. Such walls offer better protection and are more durable than the straw or raphia varieties. Solid walls are felt to be more necessary in a



Figure 4.5: Village alley with fenced-in compounds.



Figure 4.6: Co-wives relaxing in the afternoon in front of their double kitchen house.

#### 4.5. CULTURAL TRAITS OF THE NIZAA

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large village such as Galim, than in the smaller places.

The compounds may be in different stages of repair, as the straw-thatched mud brick houses do not last for many years, and regularly need rethatching and sometimes a complete makeover. Nowadays, most houses are four-corner houses, but round huts are still seen. Straw thatch is also slowly disappearing, corrugated iron more and more taking its place, as it is more durable and less prone to catch fire easily. This process is most visible in Galim, where people have more money and it is easier to get the necessary materials — Galim by moonlight is a bright sight.

In the smaller villages, some streets may be too narrow for a car or with deep grooves and hollows in the middle from the rains in rainy season, but it will usually be well swept and clean. In larger villages, there is less sense of propriety for anything outside one's own compound, and the streets are often littered with bits of plastic and paper and junk. There will be smaller alleys and backways typically used by children and women, and both along the streets and in the backyards and compounds there will be the occasional tree providing shade.

Inside each compound there are several houses. Larger compounds usually have an entrance house or hut, called *pòò* in Nizaa or *jawleeru* in Fulfulde, where guests can be received or other more public business take place. The common French translation of these words is *salon* which also points to its public function as a place to receive guests. The family father will have his own house in the compound, usually with two rooms, one with a bed and the other with at least some mats for sitting on, and maybe a chair or a bamboo bed. Other houses will be for the one or more wives, either a long house with a room for each wife, or smaller houses for each wife. The children sleep with their mother: the girls till they move out, the boys till they have been circumcised. After that they will sleep in the kitchen or wherever they can find a roof. Behind each of the houses or rooms, there is a fenced-in space with a latrine and a small built-up space for standing on while bathing.

Each wife may have her own kitchen hut or room, or they may share one kitchen. Fig. 4.6 on the preceding page shows a double-kitchen house in a compound with two wives. Co-wives will usually do the cooking one day each for the whole household. In any case the kitchen will be a house apart from the houses for sleeping. Each wife will have wood storage and kitchen utensils for herself. She will also have a store of maize corn and dried vegetables in the compound, and usually her own granary out in the fields. Nizaa women traditionally cultivate their own fields together with their children, getting aid from the husband only with certain things, such as constructing the granary.

There is often a chicken coop on high stilts in the compound, or a simple straw hut for goats or sheep. Also inside the compound, or right behind it, one may find one or more of the characteristic Nizaa granaries, shaped like a beehive on stilts

and 4-5 meters high. The floor of the granary may be 1-1.5 meters off the ground while the straw hangs down nearly to the ground, forming a little chamber. The chamber is used as extra lodging for boys. A small fire is often maintained there after the harvest, not only for comfort of those who sleep there, but for sending smoke up through the maize stored above and conserving it against insect attacks. As the boys grow into young unmarried men, maybe a son will build his own little house just outside the fencing or walls which enclose his parents' compound.

#### **Living in the village**

From the description of the physical set up of a typical Nizaa village we can already say quite a bit about some of their cultural practices. There is a village leader; he is a central authority figure with important functions in the village. He represents the village vis-à-vis authorities and acts as a link between the administration and the villagers. This is directly reflected in the physical setup of his compound within the village.

The Nizaa are polygamous, with virilocal residence. Within the household, each wife, if more than one, will have a subhousehold with her own resources. The family father's resources also are not completely pooled with the other members of the household. Responsibilities for the different aspects of life are divided: the husband is expected to take care of housing, maintain fences and provide things such as some clothing for his wife and children, and meat and fish in the diet. The women take care of cooking and propriety and childcare generally. Women do not normally head households. If the husband dies, his household will be dissolved, the wives will remarry and the children cared for by various relatives. It is very common to have children of relatives of both spouses living in with them, and not necessarily because of a breakup of their own family.

There is a strong tendency for families to stick together so that villages, or *quartiers* within a large village, will grow by sprouting off new compounds with a younger brother or a son in charge.

#### **4.5.2 The importance of the family**

The extended family constitutes the most important social networks of the Nizaa. It is a source both of mutual support and social control. The family ties are regulated by a kinship system which seems to have been matrilinear earlier, but is developing towards patrilinearity. This is encouraged not only by close contact with other patrilinear groups such as the Fulbe, but also by administrative practices such as using patronyms and generally assuming patrilinearity as the normal pattern. Remnants of the matrilinear system are seen in the fact that maternal uncles have a strong position with their sisters' children.

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Figure 4.7: Village street; granary behind well-grown fence pole trees in the compound on the right.



Figure 4.8: Cooking is just as well done outside in dry season.

### **Kinship terms**

A Nizaa person calls his or her mother *maaŋ* and her father *táá*. He or she will apply the same terms to maternal aunts and paternal uncles, while a paternal aunt is called *baa* and a maternal uncle *fam*. Grandmothers of either side are called *wàà*, while grandfathers are called *kùù*. The last two terms are also used for grandchild, with a diminutive extension: *wààram* and *kùúram*. An elder sister of a person is called *díí*, and an elder brother is called *daà*, while younger sisters and brothers both are called *nám̃*. The same terms are applied to cousins, both paternal and maternal, according to their relative age.

*Díí* and *daà* are also used as general terms of polite address: besides family members, both acquaintances and complete strangers are addressed with these terms. Addressing somebody as *nám̃* ‘little sister or brother’ to their face, is on the other hand a marked usage, even if they are your real little brother or sister, because it positions the other person as inferior to yourself. Using terms as *maaŋ* ‘mother’ or *táá* ‘father’ has the opposite effect; it is a show of respect, both when used for relatives and when used to somebody outside the family group normally addressed by this term.<sup>20</sup>

The last term to mention here is *jwìiŋ* ‘family-in-law’. In-laws are important people for a married woman; they are her main social contacts as she moves to her husband’s compound. In-laws are also important to the husband; they will expect his help in many ways, and see to that he behaves well towards his wife.

Both man and wife have responsibilities towards their spouse’s family, their in-laws or *jwìiŋ*. They are expected to voluntarily offer gifts or help with work, this is part of *jwìiŋ lòòrì* ‘fulfilling the obligations for the in-laws’. It goes without saying that respectful behaviour is expected towards mothers- and fathers-in-law, along the same lines of extensions as described above.

### **Kinship obligations and rights; the age factor.**

The kinship system comes with a number of rules of correct behaviour towards different classes of relatives. The kinship terms show sensitivity to relative age, and this is in fact an important factor in Nizaa families.

Several terms apply to the different stages of childhood. A newborn of 0 to 3 months is called a *níná*. At about 3 months there is a stage of transition as the baby becomes more aware: he or she looks at his or her hands and he/she starts grabbing things, and is generally more alert to the environment. The term for reaching this awareness is *gép̃kírã*, ‘awakened, smart’. When a baby is already *gép̃kírã*, he or she is labelled a *ròò*. This term is kept till the child reaches two or

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<sup>20</sup>The late wan Hamadina once addressed me as *wàà* ‘grandmother’ during an audience; I was 35 or 36 at the time.



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three years of age, that means usually till there is a new little brother or sister. The term *mbíram* ‘child’ is used for any person not adult. It also has a secondary use, meaning ‘servants, household subordinates’ of a master. The word *ɲuni* means ‘son’ or ‘daughter’ and is not tied to age as such.

Small children in the *ròò* stage are sometimes played with, for example made to jump or dance on the knees of a caregiver, spoken to and smiled to. Still, much time is spent without focused attention from adults, on the mother’s back or close by her as she works. Older siblings will often spend more time with a toddler, holding and talking to him or her when the mother or other caregivers are too occupied. Typically the sibling taking most care of the toddler will be 3–5 years older. A sibling younger than 3–4 years cannot really cope with a baby, and siblings older than 6–7 years will already have a number of other chores to do. Siblings, real or classificatory, relate to each other as older and younger, where the older ones have a higher status and certain rights, but also obligations towards the younger ones.

A younger person should show his respectful attitude by crouching down when speaking to an elder relative and avoid looking into his or her eyes. Whether the older person is a woman or a man does not matter, in both cases respectful behaviour is expected. The greeting ritual is especially sensitive to this custom, while casual talk following it may be carried out with both parties in more upright positions. The larger the distance in age, the more respect is expected, so that a man meeting his older paternal aunt will crouch down on the street to greet her, and possibly stay there during the entire conversation, while two persons of more equal age and status will just bow somewhat towards each other for greetings and then straighten up again. The rules for body positionings are strictest for family members. Learning to show an appropriate amount of respect towards your elders is an important part of Nizaa socialisation. Children, however, are not formally greeted by elders and are actually not expected to use formal greetings as they move freely around the village, popping in and out of households.<sup>21</sup>

While caprice and wilfulness are accepted in small children, children from the age of about three years are actively educated in how to behave. They are given small tasks to do, and corrected if they break any rules of conduct. The ban against looking into older persons’ eyes start to be enforced at this age. A child looking directly at an adult will be told *À nitaɲw cún yíra` suná pe!* ‘Do not look in the eyes of a grown-up!’ Alternatively the adult will hurl a sarcastic phrase of *Ósoko yír swiɲɲ!* ‘Thank you for looking in the eyes!’ at the child, or make a threatening gesture towards him or her.

Other rules of respectful behaviour exist as well. On one occasion I observed

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<sup>21</sup>The freedom of movement and lack of protocol enjoyed by the children are quite parallel to what has been found in other African communities, see Corsaro (1997, 34)

the father of the compound where I lived entertain a guest, a nomadic Pullo with two sons of 6 to 8 years. He did not do anything himself, however: he called his wife's sister's son, a boy of 14 or so to help him serve a meal of maize mush to his guest. The boy brought and served up the food, for the men first and then for his sons who sat in the shadow of the hut nearby (see also Fig. 4.9 on page 124). Then he sat with the two men to eat, using the laddle instead of a cup to drink his mush. At one point, the father called his six-year-old daughter to come and bring them some water. She did so, kneeling for the last few steps and not looking at the two men while putting down the water bowl before them. The behaviour was remarked upon as correct by her aunt watching the episode.

A child who often transgresses against common rules of behaviour is said to have a *būū tajwkirā* 'a hard head'. Another assessment used of children is *twááɲdwèɲ* 'stubborn', but this is not seen as only negative. It is used of an active child who moves and is curious, stretching his boundaries and thereby occasionally doing wrong things. To be intelligent, to have thoughts, is a positive trait of a child, which will manifest itself in carrying out tasks with consideration for other people and other concerns.

As the children become old enough, their parents will delegate more and more tasks to them. A mother or father will always expect the children to carry out things for them, often without explicitly asking them to do so: they should know that it is time to for example fetch water if the water jar is nearly empty. A child who thoughtlessly does her task in whichever way is evaluated by *mèé` fá!* 'There are no thoughts!', while the opposite *mèé` á ké'!* is a positive evaluation.

Kinship obligations are not only top-down, persons lower in rank may also expect help and sustenance from elder siblings, real or classificatory. As a younger sibling, you have a right to ask for things you want. A special relation also exists between grandparents and grandchildren. Generally, there is an easier relationship with maternal than with paternal grandparents. A grand parent will often be quite lenient with a grand-child, allowing him or her to use his or her possessions or take food from her stores. The grandmother of 'my' family in Mipom had remarried and lived in another village, but occasionally visited her old house, now empty, and she had some stores of food there. On one of her visits she came round to her daughter and talked about her granddaughter of about twelve years of age, who had nearly finished her stored pumpkins. She did not accuse her granddaughter of stealing, because such behaviour is accepted and not a problem in itself, but she was not entirely happy with it, since quite large amounts had disappeared: it was too much.

Such acceptance of a child taking an older person's possessions is all the more remarkable in a community which keeps strict accounts of mine and yours and does not make light of children stealing food or other items. The children were quite aware of this and did not usually transgress. A funny episode during a



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recording session of children's game shows this. At least twenty children were milling about in our compound yard, and at one point an older boy was able to pinch a packet of fried cakes from a younger girl carrying a tray of these on her head. He stuffed it in his pocket and nobody noticed. I only noticed the incident months later looking at the video. But when commenting on this to my research assistant Patouma, who was also present on that occasion, she smiled and said that he had given the packet back to the girl afterwards, and everybody had been astonished at how he could have had a packet of her cakes. But just taking it unnoticed and eat it by himself was out of the question.

Traditionally, there would be certain rules of food-sharing in family groups. In the case of 'my' family again, the father had two younger brothers living in the two compounds adjoining his own. He had now two wives, the other brothers had one each. The wives of brothers are all called *yāāɣwu* 'co-wives'. In the old days, all the wives and their children would eat together at the oldest brother's compound. Each woman would cook at her own place and bring food along to eat together with the others. But this system was not in use here, except that one of the 'co-wives' rather often dropped by at mealtimes with her three children, though she never brought anything to eat. Her behaviour was generally in jarring discord with the system of exchange of food items and services followed by her female in-laws and other women of the village. It may be noted that she was only half Nizaa herself, and had not grown up in this village.

##### **Marriage and in-laws**

Respectful behaviour is very much part of married life as well. As an example of the deference expected from wives I may mention seeing a wife kneel down with averted eyes in front of her husband and use both hands to hand over a letter to him, lifting it up so he could take it without bowing. Going back to the episode of entertaining a guest mentioned on page 121, the second wife of the pater familias happened to pass by as the group sat drinking their mush. When spoken to, she respectfully crouched down for the short exchange, then continued where she was headed, see Fig. 4.9 on the next page.

The wife will generally avoid looking directly into the eyes of her husband, and it is shameful for her to say his name aloud. A little episode I witnessed at a visit to the clinic in Galim may demonstrate the strength of this prohibition. A woman bringing in her sick child was asked the name of the father in the process of registering the patient. She looked around slightly panicked, while the nurse seemed to anticipate a difficult interview to get at the name. Luckily I knew the name and supplied it, the mother smiled gratefully and the nurse accepted it readily, clearly used to situations where names of husbands had to be produced by somebody else than the wife. The husband on the other side has rather fewer



Figure 4.9: Crouching down for a short exchange, a wife shows her husband due respect as he sits entertaining guests in their compound.

such rules to abide by as far as his wife is concerned. But he will avoid looking directly at her or in her eyes, and play his part by gracefully accepting her tokens of respect. He also needs to behave respectfully towards his in-laws. At least one person spoke of how her parents used a deferential pronoun speaking to each other, thus having respectful behaviour going both ways.

At meals the household is divided according to gender: A man will eat his meal with his circumcised sons and other males present in his house or in the pòò, while his wife eats with her daughters and smaller children in the kitchen or in her house. Female guests will eat with the women, male guests with the men. Both boys and girls can be assigned the task of bringing the food from the kitchen. The bringer is supposed to kneel for the last few steps before depositing the food on the floor among the eaters.

As noted, man and wife will not completely pool their economic resources, but it is expected that they work together for the common good of the family. The wife's responsibilities are to cook for her husband and the children, to keep the compound swept and in order, to see to the fetching of water and wood and so on. The husband is supposed to provide clothes for her, at least a set or two of the standard length of 5.33 yards of cotton tissue. A length is used to make the

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customary three-piece outfit: a blouse, one rectangular piece for a wrap-around long skirt, and another piece to carry as an extra skirt, over one's shoulder or as a cape.<sup>22</sup> A head scarf completes the outfit – Nizaa women will hardly ever show themselves in public without their head covered. The girls start to cover their heads from the age of 3. The father is also expected to provide clothes for his children, especially clothing for special occasions or for school. He should also provide food, and medicines if anyone falls ill.

Traditionally, Nizaa women are economically active, cultivating their own fields and earning money on beer-brewing or selling vegetables. A wife will dispose of her own earnings and the food she produces herself. If she manages her affairs well, she might invest in cattle. In the same way, children can cultivate a field for themselves, and keep the produce from it, but they are also expected to help their mother and father with their fields.

##### 4.5.3 The importance of agriculture

Farming is the most common occupation of the Nizaa, and the most important in terms of identity. They are *nàw dɛɛŋcí dāni*, 'people digging fields'. Their main agricultural tool is the hoe.<sup>23</sup> Ideally, a family is able to grow its own maize, which is the main staple.

People with large fields often organise a *surga* to be able to cultivate it all. In a *surga*, both men and women come together from a larger area to participate in either the first tilling of the soil or in hoeing weeds in the newly sprouted field. The owner of the fields procure food and brew maize beer (not necessarily very strong) and everybody works, eats and drinks to their heart's content. It is a fascinating sight to see how the colour of the fields change from lush green to rich black as the long lines of workers progress. There is a whole system of organisation round the *surga*, with appointed chiefs of the teams of the men and of the women, a chief-of-arms (hoes and other tools), and other people responsible for different tasks, using terms from the court and warfare domains.

As noted in 4.3.3 on page 107, the Nizaa now mainly grow maize instead of millet and sorghum. Another staple generally grown is cassava, both sweet and bitter varieties. Most families have some acres of this tuber, as a back-up in the gap between last season's harvest and the new season, or simply for variation. Peanuts is an important crop as well, providing a much used ingredient for sauces and for the maize mush drunk for breakfast. It also makes a good cooking oil when crushed.

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<sup>22</sup>This kind of clothing is not specifically Nizaa, it is standard women attire all over Cameroon.

<sup>23</sup>Plowing with a team of oxen has been introduced by a church-based development project in the last decade, together with new crops such as yam.

The work in the fields starts in March before the return of the rains: the fields are cleared of old stalks and granaries and fences are maintained. At the start of rainy season in April the heavy work of breaking the ground must be done before sowing. Timing is crucial: sowing before the start of regular rains will make the new maize plants die, while too late sowing means later harvesting. Too much rain in June and July is another danger on the riverside fields: if the fields are inundated, the maize will rot and die. August and September are harvesting time, the maize cobs are ripped off, hung to dry and then stored in the beehive-shaped granaries dotting the country side.

The fields may be situated at several kilometers from the village, and across rivers with only narrow tree-trunk foot bridges. Many families more or less move into a temporary house near their fields during the cultivation season, to be able to work daily on their fields and to guard their crops. After sowing, partridges feeding on the seeds are a problem, later the fields must be guarded against monkeys. Both tasks are often carried out by children. A large part of the harvest is usually stored on the cob in a granary in the field and then carried into the village little by little during the dry season. All transport is usually made on foot, few fields are so close to a road as to make motorized transport possible.

The Nizaa rely on their crops both for providing food for themselves and for selling to be able to pay for other necessities. There are not very many other options for paid work in the area. Thus farming is a very important activity to them. They take a strong interest in farming techniques, are proud of their own abilities in using a hoe and do not look down on manual labour (in stark contrast to some of their neighbours, (Boutrais 1995-96, vol. 2:1110). Children are encouraged and expected to take part in field work from early childhood. This is done not only to benefit from the work of the children, but also explicitly to teach children to work hard and not be lazy. It is very important to have both the skill, the stamina and the will to work the fields.

#### **Other traditional occupations**

Hunting, especially in dry season, has always been an important side kick operation for Nizaa men. In the old days, this was their main way of getting animal protein, together with fishing, since they did not raise cattle or keep other domestic animals to any large extent. Wild life used to be plentiful in their area in the old days, there were several kinds of antelopes, elephants, hippopotamuses and other big game, and of course a corresponding array of predators: lions, panthers and crocodiles. This has changed in the last 40-50 years after independence, maybe because many more people gained access to firearms and there were less restrictions on hunting. Also the development of cattle-raising has been a constant ecological pressure on the bush habitats of wild life. At the same time, meat has

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become available in the markets on a regular basis, from the many cattle owners in the area.

People still hunt, but as game has dwindled and need has become less urgent, hunting has lost some of its importance. Selling bush meat, however, is a still good way to procure cash. At least two or three antilopes were killed and sold during my five weeks in Mipom in January and February 2006, and another three were killed for a marriage celebration. It seems that bows and arrows are still used, while other hunters have licensed fire arms. Some illegal fire arms are also to be found, to be sure.

Fishing is also a regular source of food. Traditionally, large fishing parties would occasionally be organised with many people working together to catch a large amount of fish, setting their nets in the evening and sleeping out, both men and women. As the rivers diminish in dry season, the fish is easier to catch. It was a favorite pastime of the children in Mipom to look for fish under the banks and around boulders in the river, trying to catch them in basins amidst much hue and cry. Teenage boys would use nets to catch fish in a more serious fashion at night, sleeping in small make shift huts on the riverbanks.

Another popular way of getting a valued food with a cash potential is collecting honey. The Nizaa make cylindrical beehives of raphia and straw about 70-80 cm long and 30 cm in diameter, tapering towards one end. These are put in honey trees in the bush, where there is a good chance of swarming bees to find them. Such honey trees are often inherited from father to son. The quality and flavour of the honey depends on what flowering trees the bees feed on.

Traditional occupations not involving food growing is iron forging, which was mainly done by one clan, the *Nàw Majni*. Together with other necessary tools, the special Nizaa hoe was fabricated by them. The hoe is important not just as the main agricultural tool, but is also used in the marriage ceremony and carries a strong symbolic value. A son of a smith learns the skill by working with his father in the smithy, starting by helping with drawing the bellows and watching, and then gradually being given more complicated tasks. He will top his learning by apprenticing himself to some other smith elsewhere for a year or two.<sup>24</sup>

##### 4.5.4 Initiation of boys

The Nizaa have a longstanding tradition of circumcision and initiation of boys, but as much else in their culture, the customs are changing. The most important changes are the lower age for circumcision and the detachment of the circumcision proper from an initiation ceremony after a period of seclusion. The content and

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<sup>24</sup>Information from mr. Hamadicko Daniel, himself the son of a smith. He had learned the trade this way, but never practised as a full time smith.

procedures of circumcision and initiation are traditionally secret, the ‘affairs of men’, and though the following is built on interviews with two men who had participated in these customs, and a woman who had seen it from the ‘village side’, the present description comes no where near a full account of the process.<sup>25</sup>

Circumcision of girls is not practiced among the Nizaa, and generally seems to be unknown in this part of Cameroon. I do not know of any special initiation rite for young girls. Developing breasts, as a visible sign of entering puberty, is counted as an important stage, though.

#### **The *gor* circumcision**

The old Nizaa way of circumcising the boys, *gor*, involved for the boys a long period of living in the bush with a warden or two, after circumcision. In this time the newly circumcised, the *dompɛɛ* (literally ‘new cut’), must not be seen by uncircumcised persons, especially women, so they were kept well away from the village. They wore special garments, bunched fibres as a skirt and a straw hat which covered the face. Life was meant to be difficult, the *dompɛɛ* were regularly harassed by their warden, deprived of food, beaten for small offences etc. They were supposed to learn to endure hard times. If a boy died from infection or sickness, as sometimes happened, he would be quietly buried in the bush without notification of his family. The *dompɛɛ* spent at least 3 months, maybe more, in seclusion in the bush. During the first two months they would behave as wild people and chase off anybody approaching. An instrument shaped as double, flattened bells were sounded to warn off women and children, with a special melody. This phase would end with certain rites and a feast called *mvúú tùm*, ‘beer of the old’ (French: ‘vin des anciens’). After the feast they would move closer to the village, and behave less wildly. The warning melody of the bells was changed. They could pass close by, even come into the village, but they would not enter any compound and one should not try to look at them. Occasionally, the boys would dance on a spot visible from the village, but the children would be covered by tall dancing hats and would not be recognisable. Their families would not know for certain if their child had survived till the official return.

During the time in seclusion the boys were taught by their wardens and also the old men. Secrecy is still maintained as to the exact contents of these lessons, but the lessons concerned the ‘affairs of men’. This included both secret rites, and practical skills such as hunting and fishing, gathering honey, etc. They were also taught social skills, how to respect their elders and generally how to behave in certain situations.

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<sup>25</sup>I would also like to thank Mrs. Solveig Bjøru Sandnes for making available to me a series of photographs taken with her camera by the Nizaa teacher Bobbo Isac in the early 60s at an initiation ceremony near Galim.

##### **The initiation rite**

The final ordeal before the triumphal return to the village as adults is what has given its name to this whole rite of passage: a circumcised person is a *nii dag swèé nim' gor*, 'person fallen-washed in *gor* water'. The initiates were taken to a river. Adult men put up three arches of elephant grass stalks in the water, and certain rites were carried out by *nàw légrì*, 'rite persons'. The boys would be flogged and then had to pass under the arches submerged in the water, helped by their appointed sponsor. Their special bush clothes would be taken off them in the river, and at the other side new clothes for grown-ups awaited them. They were given a new Nizaa name. Finally, they were carried into the village on the shoulders of the men and there was a general feast, the *mvúú juuḡací póm*, 'beer of return into the village'. During that night, all uncircumcised persons had to pay a little (10 cfā) to be allowed to see their face and learn their new circumcision name. The mother was the only person who did not have to pay this fee; she only made a cross of salt or ashes on her son's forehead.

The flogging before the final bath in the river was meant to be a punishment for all transgression the child had made from the age of about seven years. One of those I interviewed mentioned as an example how he once had lifted his hand against his own father when being woken up abruptly. This, together with two other offences, had been duly noted and merited a lashing with a cow hide whip, leaving three scars across his belly.

Each boy would have an appointed sponsor, called *nii swèè*, 'wash person' or *nii gwèè*, 'stay person', often an uncle or other male relative. In addition to bringing the boy through the water under the arches, he could also take some of the lashings, if he wanted to spare his charge at least a part of the flogging. This person would have been chosen long beforehand. It must be somebody who could be willing to endure some pain for his charge. He would also take the money paid for seeing the newly initiated boy at the return feast, though he might share with his charge if he was kind.

The circumcision period was reckoned to continue for another year. The initiates would have at least a three-month period of abstaining from eating the flowers of a certain tree. When this was finished, the 'beer of flowers' *mvúú ḡām* would mark the end of this period. After this feast, anybody could get to know the circumcision name without paying for it.

The whole rite at the river was strictly forbidden to uninitiated people, and the initiates had to promise never to reveal any of it.

##### **Other circumcision traditions**

The Nizaa themselves recognise that their way of doing circumcision is very hard on the boys, and also both expensive and time-consuming. Nowadays, when children go to school, the bush period would have to be squeezed into the summer vacation in mid rainy season, not the best of times for living in the bush, especially with a wound which can easily become infected. Some therefore use the Mbum fashion of doing it, called *ndèŋw*, which has a shorter period of seclusion in the bush and an easier rite of initiation at the end; I have not been able to collect any data on the exact content of this.

Many also choose to forgo the whole initiation part, and just have their boys circumcised at a hospital or clinic, as early as at the age of seven or eight years. The occasion will still be marked by a feast in the boy's honour on his return to the village. It is quite unthinkable not to circumcise a boy, he would not be able to marry, for one thing. The social status of a boy used to change considerably after circumcision when it was done at a later age (the boys in Mrs. Bjøru Sandnes' pictures (see footnote on p. 128) may be twelve to fourteen years old). When circumcision takes place at the age of seven, the boy is still clearly a child. But his life will change in some ways: he will not be allowed to sleep in his mother's house any more, or enter it unbidden. Instead he will make do with a sleeping mat in the kitchen house or under the granary, or wherever he can find a roof. He becomes considerably more independent as he grows: during my stay in Mipom, the eleven-year-old boy of my host-family did not come home one day, he had trekked to a nearby larger village and was staying the night there. Some of the other children knew about it, so his mother was told, but nobody made any fuss about a child going off by himself in this way.

### **4.6 A place in modern society**

The Nizaa of today are quite far from the unruly raiders of a hundred years ago. The last decades have brought great changes into their lives: though they still inhabit a quiet corner of the Adamoua, they are steadily more aware of their place in the larger Cameroonian society and strive to develop their area. Ongoing processes are changing their lives, first and foremost the changes brought about by administration and law, and the change made by schooling and by new religious practices.



##### 4.6.1 Impact of Islam

During the last 40 to 50 years, the Nizaa have become steadily more islamized. Most villages have a mosque and even the smallest hamlet has a prayer place outside the house, set apart with a border of small stones from the rest of the yard. Friday midday prayer at the mosque is an important occasion each week. In the grand mosque of Galim, the prayer is graced by the lamido's presence in full regalia and with a large entourage, as in Ngaoundere and other of the large lamidates. The mosque and the plaza outside fill up with rows and rows of men praying. As the lamido crosses the plaza for his residence after the prayer, a troupe of trumpeteers blow long ceremonial trumpets and his entourage follows, entering his reception room for a brief closure.

The process of islamisation has involved both pressure from above and grass root movement. There was a general turn to Islam during President Ahidjo's term (1960–1982) when it became necessary to be a Moslem to get a post in the administration, on all levels from school teacher and upwards; –this policy was most pronounced in the three northern provinces with its predominantly Moslem population. Wan Hamadina in his first period as lamido from 1956 to 1961 also strongly promoted Islam on the local level. At this time it seems that he actively dissuaded the Nizaa from becoming Christians, and possibly also from attending the Mission's school in Galim, where nearly 50 of 74 students had been Nizaa in 1956 (Lode 1990, 91). The ideology of the lamido function is closely tied to a zeal for Islam, as noted before in this chapter (p. 99, 107), and emphasising Islam could only bring Hamadina more prestige on the level of the lamidates. Generally Islam goes with an upward social drift: rich cattle owners and merchants are usually Fulbe or Hausa and, therefore, Moslem by definition. To enter the ranks of these elites without emulating both their religious and social practices is unthinkable. This directly touches women, as married Fulbe and Hausa women are not allowed to leave the household. Well-to-do Nizaa men with a social reputation to take care of tend to enforce the same pattern. In such households there may be Fulbe or other wives besides Nizaa wives, and Fulfulde tend to win out as the common language of the household.

There is also a strong pressure for Islam from below. Living like a Moslem is considered the right thing to do, and neighbours do not let you get away with not fasting in the Ramadan, or not praying regularly. A man may be taunted or upbraided for not keeping his wives in *purdah* as a good Moslem is supposed to do. As knowledge of Islamic practices rise, from preaching in the mosques and from audiocassettes of religious material being disseminated, people are getting more rigorous about a correct Moslem way of living.

Many of the newer practices concern the place and role of women and children. Nizaa women traditionally went about quite freely, tending to their fields

and selling produce in the market alongside going to the river to fetch water and into the bush to get wood. Now they are often more restricted from such free movement, especially from appearing at public places such as the market, while many husbands still allow their wives to work in the fields where they are less visible to the public eye. This has an impact on the children as well: if their mother cannot leave the compound to do her small trade, she will send the children out to do it, carrying a plate of *beignets* 'fried cakes' or other items to sell. This clearly has an impact on the children's school situation: they may either be directly hindered from attending school, or at least have less time for homework during day time. For those not attending school, the *purdah* seclusion of their mothers may mean less time spent alongside grownups doing a wide range of work, and thus less opportunity to learn the skills involved.

In Galim in 2005 I met Adabouri Gonkira, then seventy-three or seventy-four years old. In Fig. 4.10 on the next page she is sitting in her house, the bag on the floor containing her special necklace to do the pregnancy rite. Together with a male relative she presides over the rites at the Jim mountain every year; she is one of the *nàw lègri* for this occasion. They belong to the *Nàw fona* clan who have the ancestral responsibility for these rites. None of her daughters or younger female relatives have been interested in taking up this heritage, however. The same problem pertains to the male officiant, there are no younger relatives ready to take up his tasks. Adabouri and a few other elderly women still carry out the rituals for widows, for pregnant women, for people who have lost their parents etc., but there is no doubt that these customs are dying out, also because people increasingly see them as pagan in relation to Islam. In their place, some Moslem rites with similar functions may come, such as the mourning period for widows.

Besides the Islamisation process proper there is also a process of becoming Fulbe going on, these two things often being seen as one and the same. It is clearly visible in naming practices: — while most children still get a traditional Nizaa name at birth, they always also get a Fulbe name, often based on an Arabic name, such as Ousoumanou, Oumarou, Fadimatou or Habiba. Usually it is these names which are used on a daily basis, while the Nizaa names sometimes are just forgotten.

There is a clear difference between Nizaa and Fulbe ideology of the good life: while the Fulbe ideal is to have large flocks of cattle and have people do all the necessary manual work for you, a Nizaa is not adverse to physical labour. He or she will be proud of their ability to hoe a field, and proud of a well-tended garden and a full granary won by his or her own labour. Even if children are relentlessly pushed to work hard and do chores for their parents, they also see their parents working even harder, not lazing in the shade under a tree exchanging endless greetings with friends and neighbours. Again the ideals of a good life are changing as rich Nizaa strive to emulate the Fulbe ideal, rather than being *nàw*

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Figure 4.10: Adabouri Gonkira of the Nàw fona`

*dɛɛŋci dání*, ‘people digging fields’.

The Fulfulde language is a strong factor in these processes. As noted about the linguistic setting in section 4.4 on page 108, Fulfulde plays the role of *lingua franca* in the whole northern area generally, and in the Galim-Tignère subdivision specifically. To the extent that Islamic preachers make use of a local language, it is mostly Fulfulde. In the Ramadan, there are preachings at the mosque in Fulfulde, audiocassettes of Islamic teachings are in Fulfulde, and so forth. In a marriage ceremony at which I partly attended during my fieldwork, there was a session of marriage counseling of the husband in the house of his first wife, with several relatives present; this was done in Fulfulde. Though he and his wives were all Nizaa, some of the new in-laws were not, and possibly the main speaker at this occasion did not know Nizaa. In such situations of multiple languages where not everyone understands Nizaa, Fulfulde is almost always chosen.

#### 4.6.2 Changes by law and administration

Cameroon has as many African nations, a sort of double administrative system inherited from colonial times. The colonial administrators were concerned with ‘pacifying’ the country, and generally tried to prevent all kinds of bloodshed, also in the case of death penalties used in traditional courts. At the same time, these traditional courts, usually centered round the chief, kept some jurisdiction over less important affairs, such as marriage disputes and inheritance rulings. There are for example still two legal forms of marriage in Cameroon, with different ways of divorcing or regulating the affairs.

In the civil marriage, both parties sign a marriage certificate that specifies whether the marriage will be monogamous or polygamous, while traditional marriages have no legal hinders for polygamy. The civil marriage is solemnised at the sous-prefecture or other public office, with or without a Western style marriage feast. The traditional marriage is celebrated by the families, after contracting about dowry (also called bride price), and with traditional rituals, more or less Islamized. The extended family pitch in to make a memorable feast; each invited guest to the feast is expected to give some money, and the women of the family work hard to make all the food necessary to feed a large number of people for several days. Preparations such as to pound the maize for the feast are festive social occasions in their own right, with chanting and drumming accompanying the work. Sometimes both forms of marriage are used together, and there certainly is an active uptake of Western-style marriage customs, often transformed in interesting ways, as when the groom is given a bouquet of plastic flowers to hold for the official photograph while his new wife rests hidden from all eyes, and especially the groom’s, in her new house.

##### **Integration processes**

Though Cameroon is in many respects a modern country with modern administrative infrastructure and regulations, these by no means reach each and every citizen and all places. Visiting the large village Wogomdou on a market day in 2005, I met a civil servant from the sous-préfecture in Galim who had put up a table in the shade under the large tree in front of the *jawro*'s compound. Here he sat with a large pile of some fifty or sixty new identity cards commissioned by people in the area, waiting for them to show up and get their cards. Now everybody in Cameroon is required by law to always carry identification papers; you get arrested and/or fined if you can not present your ID to the *gendarmérie* at any time and place. Still, there evidently was a substantial group of people here, both older and younger, who had managed without such papers up until now, in these fairly remote corners of the Adamaoua.

To get an ID card you must normally have a birth certificate, which is also a rare piece of paper in many villages. The first place where such a paper may be required is at the registration of the child in school. But if there is no school, the children do not need it much, and consequently parents often neglect to get a birth certificate for their children, or at least put it off for several years. When it is finally made, some prefer to enter a birth date convenient for some purpose, such as staying on in primary school after the age of fourteen, or enter some other education with an age limit. Official ages are rarely to be trusted.

Birth certificates and ID cards also concern naming practices among the Nizaa. The Nizaa names are not always written if or when the birth certificate is made, and so disappear from all official identification of the person. The last problem is also connected to the fact that Nizaa names do not have standardised spellings, as the language so recently has been developed as a written language. The Fulbe names have a longstanding written standard already, and are more easily understood by any civil servant making out certificates. Patronyms are always required for such cards, introducing more and more the two name system imported from the colonial powers. The use of patronyms as a normal part of a person's name also underscores the importance of the father as head of the family, though both mother's name and father's name are required to get an ID card or birth certificate.

What we see illustrated in the simple story of a civil servant giving out ID cards is that many common administrative functions are still in the process of seeping out into countryside. This applies both to the need for identification papers and the possibility of actually getting them without traveling to a larger administrative center. The same process is taking place in a number of other sectors. Health, education, sanitation in the villages, veterinary services, hunting regulations and wild life preservation are all areas where the Cameroonian government is

slowly expanding its efforts, often relying on local initiative to identify needs and resources.

This is especially true of schools. While there clearly has been a great effort from the school authorities in the last years to expand the schooling facilities in the more rural parts of the country, the usual path to actually getting a school often goes by way of local commitment. In several of the villages around Galim, the school has started out as a local parent's school, with parents paying a more or less educated young man of the village to teach their children. He will normally be acknowledged by the school inspector in Galim, and so may be invited to participate in teacher reunions. If the village parents can keep this up for a year or two, or maybe three, showing that there is real interest in the village for sending their children to school, the government may involve itself by officially creating the school, giving it some teaching materials and books and send a trained school teacher to the village on a public salary. He will not be able to teach the full primary cycle all by himself, but he will start out with a first grade class, and teach a combined first and second grade class next year, hoping to get another teacher to share the burden later. The next step is to build a proper school building, the nascent public school usually having made do with some locally made structure till then — a large entrance hut, a straw hut or just a straw roof with benches. The prospect of later getting a school building of durable materials and a state-paid teacher was actively used in parent's meetings to motivate villagers to send their children to school and sacrifice something to pay a teacher. Even when the school and some teachers are in place, there are not always enough teacher resources to teach a complete six-year cycle, see Table 6.2 in 6.3 on page 226, and so the population is again asked to provide something themselves, with the understanding that this will also earn them some favour with the administration later on.

Health clinics have been around since the late 1930s when the Norwegian missionary Dr. Kristian Skulberg set up a medical service in Galim (Lode 1990, 64). The *dispensaire* of the Norwegian Mission Society, later the Cameroonian Lutheran church, kept catering to the needs of the population for many years until 1993, when it was closed after the opening of a state hospital in Galim. It was reopened about 10 years later, as the growing population of the area represents a large market for health services. Some services are brought out of Galim by personnel of the hospital having service days in other villages, or by larger vaccination campaigns. More important for public health issues is the fact that there now are roads to many corners of the area, making it much more feasible to bring sick people to the hospital. Again some of the roads have been constructed not by the government, but as a result of local engagement, in some cases led by a village development project of the Lutheran church.

All of these processes are furthering the integration of the countryside in the



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modern state of Cameroon, in Galim-Tignère as elsewhere. The administration, by allowing private initiative along with their own efforts, comes to have a better control of the population and a better possibility for caring for the citizens. Generally these processes are viewed positively by the population and serve well the administration's purpose of integration. So along with the development of e.g. schools, there has been a growing interest in schooling and a greater understanding of the benefits of knowing French and other subjects, of getting an education and a chance in the larger job market, and of doing things the way others in Cameroon do them. Some of the interest stems from the fact that the exigencies of the larger society are reaching people along with the benefits. The process of adjusting to the general views and practices of a larger Cameroonian society is well underway among the Nizaa.

In the beginning of the present chapter we looked at the communal Nizaa selfpresentation on the outer and inner walls of the *chefferie* of Galim. Its blend of historical roots, Moslem symbols of power and linguistic items of Fulfulde and French origin is a veritable snapshot of some of the most important forces which has contributed to shape the sociocultural environment of Nizaa children. In this environment, their lives are lived out both in the backways and courtyards of the village, on the public plaza, and in the fields and valleys surrounding the village, as we saw in the later sections of the chapter. Here they soak up learning from the cultural community in which they move. They are taught skills as they work. They are taught how to speak and be spoken to by elders and youngers as they watch interaction and interact themselves with other people. They learn games and knowledge as they play with each other, building a peer culture from the ways of earlier generations, but still belonging to its present participants.

The forces of the common cultural and linguistic background, and of the practices of their local community, are directly relevant to what and how Nizaa children learn outside school. What knowledge and competencies do Nizaa children bring with them as they enter school? What speech genres do they draw upon in their interaction with others? This is the theme of the next chapter.





## Chapter 5

# Speech genres of learning in the village

Chapter 4 sketched out the sociocultural environment of children growing up in the area by detailing some of the physical, historical and linguistic context of the Galim area, together with cultural traits. The present chapter will enter into a more detailed analysis of how children learn in an informal village setting, and how language is used in teaching and learning interaction.

The general perspective of the Nizaa of the Galim-Tignère area as a *cultural community* plays a role in the analysis, as parts of the chapter concern practices typically associated with the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. Nevertheless, though it is possible to rephrase a cultural community simply as “a community of practice with a very long cycle of reproduction,” (Lave & Wenger 1991, 98), it is a more revealing view to take Nizaa villages to contain several communities of practice. There will be many similarities and a feeling of likeness in the larger context, but the smaller communities have their own enterprises and, what is of most interest here, they may very well have their own repertoires of communication.

The notion of community of practice is in any case essential for understanding teaching and learning:

“A community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice. A community of practice is an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge, not least because it provides the interpretive support necessary for making sense of its heritage. Thus participation in the cultural practice in which any knowledge exists is an epistemological principle of learning.”

— Lave & Wenger (1991, 97)

Consider for a moment the implications of saying that knowledge exists only in a community that can provide the interpretive support necessary to make sense of it. This means that there must be a larger frame of reference in which to insert the knowledge and that there must be ways of communicating this frame of reference to newcomers, and to communicate about it for those already into the practice. The main interpretive support system is language, to be sure, with all its possibilities of establishing conventions for meaningful use in structured communication.

Any community of practice will exploit the linguistic resources available to them in the larger context. In our case, this means using Nizaa, using Fulfulde, more occasionally using French, and maybe Hausa or Tchamba or even other languages. Many linguistic practices of all kinds will be common to the larger context. In addition, different communities will often develop slightly different repertoires of communication specific to them, creating a possibility of more efficient communication within the community who shares the conventions, and a possibility of indexing in-group solidarity.

Speech genres, as typical forms of utterances, will be just one kind of many such shared devices for a community of practice. Some speech genres will be used by the total cultural community (a good example may be the introduction words to a riddle game), others may be tied to some specific community only.

Turning now to the theme of teaching and learning interaction in the village setting, I shall look at actual learning situations of different kinds, set in communities of practice in the larger cultural community of the Nizaa. In each case the use of speech genres of that situation is examined.

However, the first section, 5.1, presents the theoretical model of speech genre analysis from Chapter 2.5 in more detail, applied to teaching and learning situations. Section 5.2 gives an outline of the learning processes in the context of the family as an economic unit. Games as an expression of children's peer culture (Corsaro 1997, 163) are dealt with in section 5.3; such games are good environments for practising speech genres. Riddles and tales are other important learning activities for children, treated in 5.4. Finally 5.5 brings a discussion of these traditional learning environments for verbal knowledge as usage events of speech genres.

## **5.1 Speech genres as analytical tool**

As we saw in 2.5.2 on page 42, I use the notion of linguistic units on all levels in cognitive linguistics to establish a category of *speech genres* as symbolic structures. By identifying speech genres as linguistic units, pairing up a semantic structure (schematic meaning) with a phonological structure (spoken or otherwise

expressed form), this kind of discourse patterns is opened up for investigation along the same lines as other symbolic structures. They become eligible as an analytical category, with similar traits to other linguistic units. To see speech genres as linguistic units thus means that they have discoverable recurrent traits of form in several vocalisation channels, paired with recurrent semantic traits in several conceptualisation channels. Since speech genres are schematic, underdetermining both their conceptual content and their vocalised form, the actual use of a speech genre in interaction will have richer meanings and forms pertinent to that usage event.

‘Speech genre’ as a term comes from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (Bakhtin 1986), where it means types of utterances as used in different spheres of human activity, see 2.2.2 on page 26. His use of the concept also emphasises that genres exists in everyday situations of language use just as much as in ‘literary’ texts. As noted in 2.5.4 on page 49 I will follow these parts of his definition of speech genres.

In the present study, there is a sphere of activity which we can label village life in the Galim area of Cameroon. Within this sphere, I target situations of teaching children different skills, both verbal and non-verbal. How do children learn to do everyday tasks, and what about more specific skills? In the village setting, part of the teaching-learning interaction is clearly based on the use of a number of texts of ‘folklore’, traditional items with conventional form and content enacted in recurring performances, as discussed in 2.5.3. How are these learned, and what can children learn from them? From the work of Abrahams (1976), I take the useful categories of conversational genres, play genres and fictive genres to better treat these texts.

In the later Chapters 7 and 8 I deal with the sphere of activity of modern schooling, which has quite different forms of teaching and learning. I use the speech genre notion to look for recurrent verbal interactional traits in this sphere of activity as well. Again the category of conversational genres comes in handy, as I argue that classes typically become communities of practice with a shared repertoire of communication. As classes engage in ‘doing school’ speech genres emerge and come to shape discourse expectations and meanings.

### Other terms

Two other related terms will be useful in the analyses as well. They have a similar, but not completely identical meaning: *interactional routine* (Peters & Boggs 1986) and *interactional pattern*. As their names indicate, both ‘interactional routine’ and ‘interactional pattern’ are concerned with dialogical genres, rather than single-speaker texts. Speech genres as such can be either predominantly

monological or dialogical. A text shaped by a monological genre<sup>1</sup> does not directly project a response, while a dialogical genre projects some response, a typical example being adjacency pairs such as question-answer or suggestion-consent (Clark 2006, 134).

The notion of interactional routine<sup>2</sup> covers instances of frequently used and strongly scripted interactions, with few options for individual choice.

An example of how ‘interactional routine’ is used in the present work is found in Chapter 7. The ‘stand-up–sit-down’ events in the classroom interaction described in 7.3 are typical interactional routines with a fixed pattern of verbal commands and verbal and bodily responses by prescribed participants. The simplest form consists of rising, sitting down and rising again, and can be extended in several ways: exercises of hand and arm movements, singing one or more songs, or simply to sit down again. Whatever the extension, the basic meaning is a break; after such a sequence the class learns to expect a change in theme. Another routine is the elicitation of today’s date, a staple item in starting the school day. While the production of today’s date by the class is routine, and each teacher probably develops a certain string of questions to get there with his class, this routine is less rigid in its form, as different student responses may give rise to longer or shorter elicitation sessions. Still its goal is to reach a recitation of the current date and so its text is strongly constrained. In each class, the way of doing today’s date will become an interactional routine.

While I consider speech genre as a type of linguistic unit, and interactional routine as a subtype of speech genres, ‘interactional pattern’ is a more general category, as patterns of interaction can be outside the purview of linguistic interaction altogether. It also emphasises other features, such as the participation structure with its array of rights and obligations, be it in speaking and listening or in other interactional events.

### **5.1.1 Speech genres of teaching and learning**

The aim of the present study is not to study all and any speech genres, but primarily those used in *teaching and learning*, as this connects to the larger issues of language and interaction, noted in 1.1. The speech genres of teaching and learning have characteristics that can be brought out by using some specific constructs of the theory of cognitive linguistics (CL) as presented in Chapter 2. I will first consider the concept of the Current Discourse Space, which is an elaboration of the notion of usage event.

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<sup>1</sup>The notion of monological genres should be taken as relative, not absolute: even monologic texts enter chains of communication, and all utterances are by definition parts of multiparty interaction, whatever their generic status.

<sup>2</sup>The term has been used in language socialisation studies, e.g. Peters & Boggs (1986).

I treated in 2.4.4 the concept of usage events in CL, including Langacker's notion of the constantly unfolding Current Discourse Space (CDS) and the 'viewing frame' within it, see Figs. 2.1 on page 40 and 2.2 on page 41. According to Langacker, any language use event moves through time, in consecutive updatings of the 'discourse space', that is, of the immediate use and context of speech. Each CDS is a 'chunk' of the discourse with some feeling of boundedness to it. Langacker proposes that intonation units are good partitions of the discourse, as they often constitute attentional framings (Langacker 2001, 154–5). Change of speaker is another fairly obvious partition: the updating of the joint discourse space in this way can happen by any of the participants in the interaction.

Talk and context are viewed as integrated and jointly present in the discourse space. The space contains the Ground with minimally Speaker and Hearer, their context, and the shared knowledge of the interlocutors, together with the linguistic units used. Linguistic expressions serve to focus the interlocutors' joint attention on some point by profiling it in the usage event, creating a 'viewing frame' for joint attention. The viewing frame contains both the vocalisation and the conceptualisation of the linguistic expressions used. Linguistic units in this framework are seen as "schematized patterns of action that are immanent in usage events rather than distinct entities. ... A linguistic unit is thus a multifaceted cognitive routine which can be activated and carried out when occasion arises" (Langacker 2001, 146). Any aspect of usage events, and also a sequence of usage events in a discourse, is capable of emerging as a linguistic unit, if it is a recurrent commonality of many usage events. This means that utterances with typical forms, or speech genres, are likely to become linguistic units.

From the discussion of genres in Chapter 2.5.2, we can now see the full import of this claim. Speech genres will manifest typical wordings, but they will also have typical structures of context, typical participants, typical functions and other typical patternings. Many of these typical traits will be fairly schematic, not specified in detail, but still recognisable over many instances of use. In my view, it is possible to abstract speech genres of teaching and learning with specific typical forms on some level, by describing the interaction in terms of the principled way allowed by the CDS construct.

Importantly, we should recognise that in the pair of teaching and learning, learning is the more basic activity. People can learn without any overt teaching going on, and without any specific speech genre of learning in use. Carrying out practices is also *practising* them in the sense of becoming more competent in new skills, learning them better. Still, my goal here is to look at actual teaching and learning taking place as focused activities. I shall first look at this from the perspective of teaching.

### 5.1.2 Schemas of teaching and response

A teaching-learning stretch of discourse is first and foremost characterised by a perceived asymmetry in the knowledge of the participants. The teacher or expert knows more than the learner, and this disparity is normally recognised by both parties.<sup>3</sup> This means that in each string of CDS's for teaching and learning, there is an expert's knowledge which both parties know about, but of which only the expert knows the content. Fig. 5.1 on the next page shows this discourse situation with a Teacher T and a Learner L. The Teacher's knowledge appears in the figure as a larger knowledge frame than the knowledge shared by both T and L. T's goal as teacher is to make her knowledge part of L's knowledge, and so she makes it accessible to L by communicating it in a usage event of language. The CDS in the middle of the figure contains a usage event with focused viewing of the content of the knowledge of T. As the discourse situation moves forward in time, each usage event of linguistic expressions brings up new items of T's knowledge, or L's response to the items. The situation is grounded in the presence of T and L, they have some concrete context around them, like say, a classroom, and they share at least the knowledge of what they are doing together: teaching and learning respectively.

In Fig. 5.1 such a teaching usage event is shown, then, but only as a completely abstract schema with no content and no form of vocalisation. It is a very general schema, which can be filled with a large number of more specified teaching usage events. To get a more concrete, but still schematic example, I have constructed a more specified Viewing frame of a typical teaching utterance in English, meant to impart knowledge of some object to a learner, see Fig. 5.2 on page 146. The object is stipulated as small enough to handle manually. The T and the L together with the object are part of the Ground which is not visible in this figure, but they are also profiled in the conceptualisation channel of Objective situation, as the object is handled by T, and L is addressed by her. Their appearance in a conceptualisation channel entails that they are there as *constructed entities*: their physical and 'real' existence is in the ground, while each of them conceptualises herself, the other and whatever entities are attended to in the ongoing discourse, in the Objective situation. These conceptualisations are sensitive to how the talk and other semiotic systems construe them (gesture, body configurations, shared knowledge of status and relations and so on). When necessary I will distinguish between entities in the Ground and conceptualised entities in the Objective situation channel by writing e.g. T and L for the former, and T' and L' for the latter.

Fig. 5.2 on page 146 brings us closer to the notion of teaching speech genres

<sup>3</sup>This asymmetry of knowledge may not be the case, as when a man on the bus starts to lecture the person next to him on some subject without knowing that the other has a university degree in that particular field; the man would still presumably use teaching speech genres.

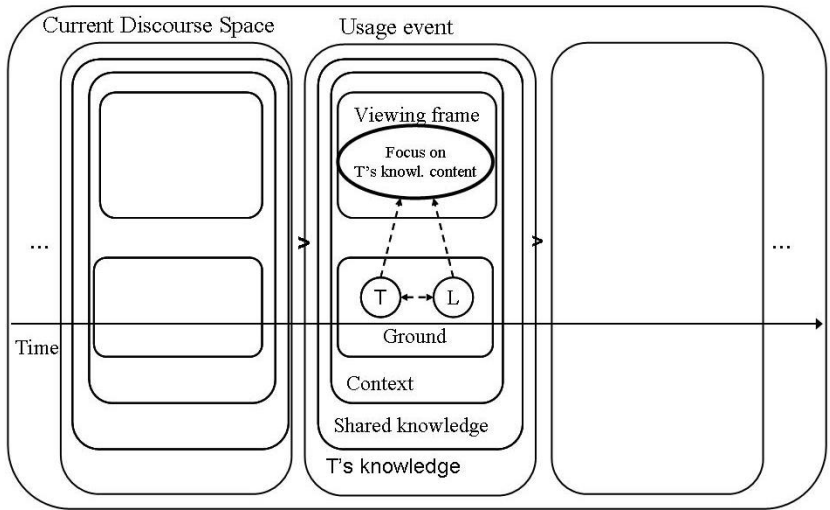


Figure 5.1: Sequence of usage events in a teaching usage event

by showing a schematic representation of a common frame used in teaching situations of this kind, or rather a coalescing of at least three consecutive frames, if we go by the partition of intonation units. T uses several vocalisation channels, the most salient one being that of *Segmental content*. It contains besides the actual content of the explanation, a start frame, consisting of the word “Look!” with which T addresses L and gets her attention, before going on to explain the object. As the explanation part ends, T adds a closing frame by saying “See?”, moving her gaze from the object over to L again.

While explaining by talking, T also points and manipulates the object explained, and she gazes at it, employing the vocalisation channels of *Gesture* and *Gaze*. T uses the channel of *Intonation* as part of the usage event as well, with an intonational pattern where she signals ‘about to continue’ in the beginning, then continues, and finally ends with a rise pattern signaling a question, projecting the learner’s response. On the conceptualisation side, the most salient channel is the *Objective situation* where both T’ and L’ and the object under consideration are profiled by the words and the other vocalisation channels used. The start frame and end frame gives an introduction and a closing to the explanation given. The *Information structure* is marked by the new discourse topic of the explanation given by T, but also contains a ‘get attention’ part and ‘comprehension check’ part. Finally, the usage event is conceptualised as T’s turn, and ends with T projecting

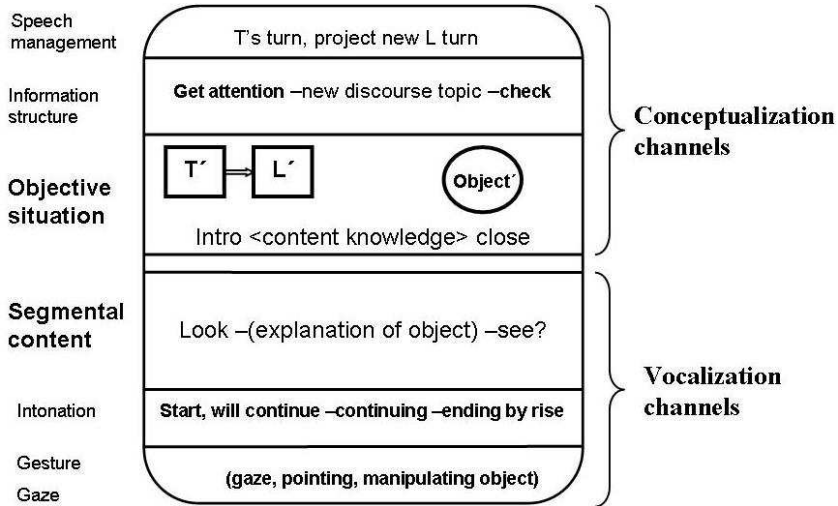


Figure 5.2: A coalesced viewing frame of a teaching schema

a new turn by L, selecting her as the next speaker.

The start and close frames employed by T is an important part of what makes this specifically a teaching event. They orient the interaction towards the communication of knowledge from T, who knows, to L, who doesn't know. To the extent that this formula is used in many instances of explaining things to one or more L's, it is likely to become an entrenched routine, a speech genre of teaching. As it becomes used many times, the very word 'Look!' and maybe picking up an object and gazing at it, will already tell potential learners that they are about to get an explanation. When T says 'See?', L knows that one phase of the explanation is completed, and that she has the possibility to respond.

Going on now to a possible response from L to T's turn, I have constructed a new viewing frame which will effect an updating of the CDS by change of speaker, see Fig. 5.3 on the facing page. Fig. 5.3 contains the earlier projected response of L to T's explanation. As Segmental content I have put "Yea, I see" together with L's nodding, but a number of other phrases would have been possible, like 'Okay' or only nodding. Negative rejoinders, like 'No, I just don't get it', or requests for more information, like 'What did you say that little bit was for?' are also quite possible as responses. To some extent, other contextual factors such as relative status of T and L, importance of learning goal for T and for L, and relevant aspects of the larger cultural context will be part of L's choice to respond



## 5.1. SPEECH GENRES AS ANALYTICAL TOOL

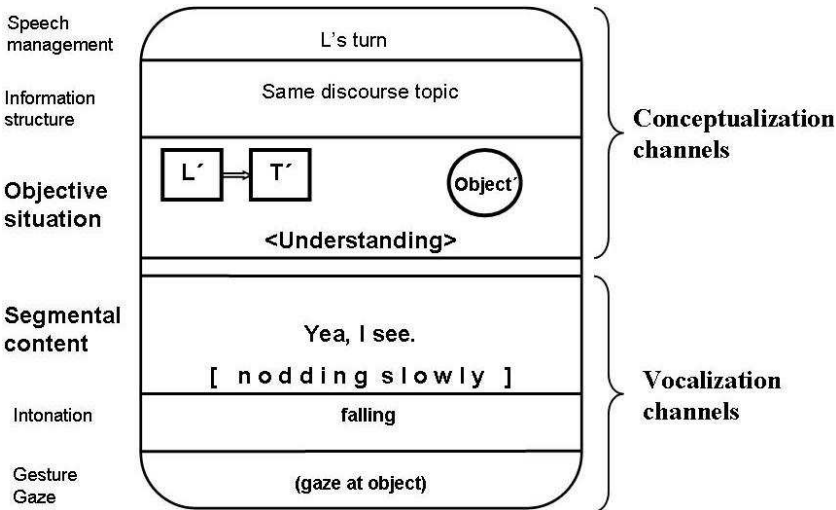


Figure 5.3: The viewing frame of a learning schema

in a particular way, as it will have an impact on how T does her teaching, and on the construal of herself as L' and of T as T'. Again some response, or aspect of response, used in many instances of this particular situation is likely to become entrenched as a schematic speech genre. Frequent usage will engender discourse expectations.

### Teaching-learning sequences

Naturally, as commonalities of many usage events can become entrenched as a linguistic unit, so can series of such events. A simple visualisation of such a series built from the two preceding schemas is given in Fig. 5.4 on the next page. The arrows between the two viewing frame schemas show typical connections in the discourse space. The projected turn is taken by L, the comprehension checked on by T is accomplished and feedback is given. The gaze and gesture channel is partly shared by the two. Therefore the arrow points both ways, while the segmental content and the accompanying intonation vocalisation channels are sequential from one schematic frame to the next and have unidirectional arrows following the timeline.

Importantly the content of T's explanation is by T's externalisation of it in words and gestures made part also of L's conceptualisation of the situation. The

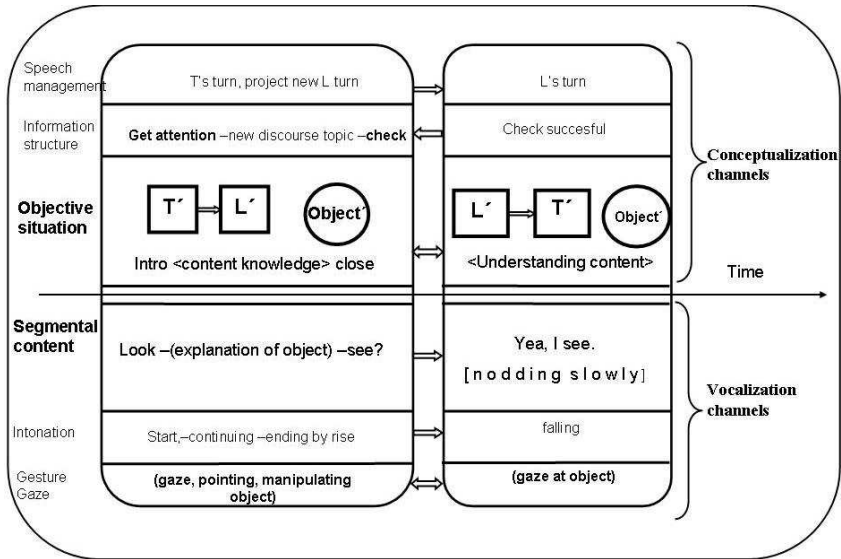


Figure 5.4: A schematic teaching-learning sequence

incremental increase in L's understanding follows T's unfolding explanation in a back-and-forth movement of their conceptualisations.

The frame encompassing the sequential viewing frames in 5.4 denotes that the two frames have been coalesced to a larger unit. The larger discourse spaces, not shown in Fig. 5.4, contain the Ground, the Shared knowledge, the Cultural context and that larger frame of knowledge that belongs to T. In the case shown here, that frame is slightly diminished, while the frame of Shared knowledge is increased.

### Further considerations

In the preceding paragraphs I have attempted to show a possible English schema for a teaching and learning speech genre. The resulting figures may look nice or not, but they have in any case a very basic flaw: they are built on my use of introspective data instead of real language use, and far from any real community of regularly interacting persons. I have of course done so for reasons of exposition, as it is presumably easier to understand the workings of such schemas with recognisable linguistic expressions and situations than totally unknown ones. It is nonetheless 'the real thing' that will occupy us for the rest of the present work, as I present schemas abstracted from actual language use, recorded in naturalistic

settings.

The advantage of CL as linguistic theory is its ability to explain the existence of such things as speech genres and other discourse patterns of teaching and learning, as exemplified in Figs. 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 on the preceding page. By systematizing the many aspects of natural language use captured in the updating discourse space notion, it is possible to abstract schemas of language which are truly relevant to the language users. Speech genres are by definition local, community-based patterns, and there is no contradiction between seeing them as emergent patterns of language and as part of the shared repertoire of a community of practice or a larger cultural community.

Using speech genres as the main analytical category means to see repeated verbal patterns as instances of a schema, already formed for some speakers, and on its way for others. Each instance reinforces the pattern in some direction, but not all instances will be identical. To study interaction from this point of view is to look at the fascinating processes of language in forming, as schemas of recurrent commonalities are abstracted and conventionalised to symbolic structures in their own right, shaping the utterances of people familiar with them.

## **5.2 Learning skills in a work community: the village of Mipom**

The next sections will present data mostly from one small Nizaa village, with about 200 inhabitants. It is a place where everybody knows everybody and furthermore are related by family or marriage to almost everybody else as well. All the inhabitants do not necessarily interact on a daily basis, but many subgroups do, the family units, the neighbourhoods, friends, the men praying in the mosque, the market vendors and the buyers. It would not be surprising to meet with specific ways of using language in such a place, neither would it be surprising to find similar things in the next village: after all they belong to the same general cultural and physical setting, and people visit relatives and do business with each other all over the area.

As noted before, Nizaa children learn a number of basic life skills simply by doing their normal tasks in the family. They learn for example how to kindle and keep a fire going, to cut wood for this purpose, what trees are good for firewood, and so on. They come to know this by being around fires and both observe the work and do tasks themselves. Likewise, when they follow their parents to the fields in the cultivation season, they are put to work, learning how to hoe, how to weed, and how to harvest maize and other food stuffs. Starting with easy tasks, they go on to more complex or heavier work as they grow up.

### 5.2.1 Getting newcomers into a practice

The base line of this kind of learning is that the learner is actively contributing while coming into how to do a task. It is in everybody's best interest, the children's included, that they increase the well-being and productivity of the family and that they steadily develop their skills by getting tasks to do that they can manage.

A little story may serve to illustrate the characteristics of such learning in a Nizaa village setting. On my first short visit to Mipom in 2005, it was harvesting time. Late in the afternoon a group of children were busy shelling corn in the compound where I was staying, squatting on the ground round a large basin full of cobs. The youngest child present was Asta, then 14 or 15 months old, the oldest was Fadi, 14 years old. I sat down to help them, though I had never tried to do this work before. It turned out to be quite hard to get the dry kernels loose and I was hard put to even get an opening on the close-set rows of kernels on my cob. Seeing my problems, Laawa, 8 years old, laughs and takes the cob out of my hands, rips off one or two strips of kernels and hands it back. Now I could press sideways on the kernels, and it became much easier to get them off. She continued preparing such cobs for me in between rapidly shelling her own cobs, so that I had a continuous supply of easy-to-shell cobs. In this way I was able to actually contribute a bit, though still working much more slowly than the girls chatting and giggling around me.

What is interesting here is the fact that Laawa, seeing that I did not have the necessary skill to do this work, had a strategy ready which simplified the task and made possible my participation in shelling. All the other children except Asta had acquired the knack of getting the kernels off the cob, but they also knew how to simplify the task to include a novice, so that she could efficiently contribute. Asta, young as she was, was not able to do it properly, but she had already started imitating the others, as is seen in Fig. 5.5 on the facing page.

At other times as well during my field work, I tried to put myself in a learner's position among children working and the same thing happened: they knew both how to do some task and how to simplify it for guiding a new participant into doing it. They were able to show me exactly how hands should be used or things carried out, to get a good result. They had learned both to do the task and to teach others by demonstration, focusing on carrying out the job at hand.

#### **Practicing life skills**

This kind of learning probably goes on without too much attention to it as teaching and learning. Children are simply expected to pitch in, and are routinely told to carry out any chore that a parent sees they are capable of doing. They are not left completely on their own while doing it, though. The adult will usually quietly



Figure 5.5: Souraya, Laawa, Asta, Fadi and Halima shelling corn: acquiring skills by participating in the everyday work

monitor the child's work and give directions if they find it necessary, even when they are seemingly occupied with other things. An example from my field journal of my later stay in Mipom shows this in the story of how 6-year-old Halima took care of her little sister Asta, then 18 months old.

*22nd January 2006*

Asta had diarrhea, and had already had a major accident in the courtyard which her mother Maayi had dealt with, putting Asta on her potty while clearing up. Then Maayi went out for some errand, leaving Asta behind.

When a new attack made Asta defecate several times, making a trail in the courtyard, she went herself and fetched her potty. Her aunt was present, she sat talking with Astadicko, an older woman from the neighbourhood. Noticing Asta's problems, the aunt called for Halima to help her. Halima covered the diarrhea spots with dry earth and scooped it up on an old tray to put it in the latrine, like her mother had done. Then she managed to get the dirty dress off an angry Asta, and washed her properly, rinsing her behinds with water from

a kettle. While her aunt kept up the conversation with her visitor, she monitored closely what Halima was doing, occasionally directing her. Afterwards her aunt remarked to me that Halima took good care of her little sister, but she did not praise Halima directly.

The incident as such was not meant to teach Halima or Asta anything, but they both practiced important life skills, Asta to use the potty, and Halima to keep the courtyard clean and to wash a toddler. They also learned maybe that such skills are not done for the sake of adult praise, but simply as tasks which have to be carried out.

Such ‘on-the-job-training’ stories are quite classic examples of how a community of practice works. These common processes of children getting ordinary and necessary skills for living are dubbed ‘guided participation,’ by e.g. Rogoff (2003). In community of practice theory, the stories are examples of how the zone of peripheral legitimate participation for newcomers works. To become a competent member of a community of practice, a newcomer has to carry out his or her practices as well as possible, with more experienced members facilitating the task at first till the newcomer has learnt enough to manage.

Here the community of practice corresponds to the family group as the basic economic unit, consisting of people engaged in the joint activity of producing enough food to eat and to sell for some cash income. The children are new members, still not competent in all the practices of the community, but ready to learn, and definitely contributing to its development. They learn skills because they participate in real work tasks where their contributions are valued (Lave & Wenger 1991).

### Speech genres

Teaching is a less focused activity in the kind of learning situations described above, so there are probably fewer speech genres in use in such situations. The following seems to be a common way of proceeding: Caretakers would show things to learners, at most maybe saying things like *Pín` lèè!* ‘do like this!’ or using a more specific action verb. Learners were not expected to talk much in such interactions. When the task had been demonstrated, they would simply try to carry it out the same way. Such imitation would go on also without explicit showing. Adults would watch children working and correct any problems arising. As soon as things were going alright, the adult would turn her attention elsewhere.

The story of Halima taking care of Asta shows this directing of actions from an adult monitoring the proceedings. A fairly striking trait here is the fact that Halima is left alone to do the necessary work of cleaning up and washing Asta — her aunt just assumes that she is capable of doing most of it, though she keeps an

eye on her to help her over rough spots if necessary. As a teaching genre, it signals quite a lot of independence and responsibility to the learner, training her to think for herself. Directions when necessary will then expand competence maximally, where the child needs it, without belittling her already acquired competence.

The next section describes a more specific teaching situation, where it is possible to abstract a teaching speech genre schema, with a corresponding learning speech genre.

### 5.2.2 A skill demonstrated

Turning from this ‘on the job-training’ situations to another kind of learning, we shall look at an instance of expert-novice interaction, videotaped during my longer stay in Mipom. On this occasion I had arranged a meeting with a lady of some 60 years, Tobi, to show me how the Nizaa used to ‘crochet’. Crocheting turned out to be a sewed coiling technique for making platters and lids from a fibrous grass called *bàli*, with the help of an awl. A bundle of fibres is coiled around itself and kept in place by a fibre stitching each coil to the preceding in an everwidening spiral. The tool used as awl was the iron pin normally used for dividing the hair in order to plait it. To show me, Tobi had undone a little of an old platter, and was now redoing it while I taped. Then two teenage girls, Doudou and Loumbi, came by. They were immediately drawn to watching Tobi’s work, not casually like a couple of other bystanders, but seriously observing. Tobi herself just as naturally fell into a teaching role.

The guiding idea of the following partitioning and analysis of the interaction is Goodwin’s use of contextual configuration to analyse talk-in-interaction (Goodwin 2000). Importantly, it is Tobi’s work that structures the interaction, more than what she says, or rather, her talk is organised by what she is doing. At the same time, the talk is used to underline and set apart cycles of actions as phases of plattermaking. The cycles of plattermaking actions together with the linguistic marker of each cycle’s end form the basis for the partitioning of the transcribed interaction.

Their interaction is transcribed, commented and analysed in the following pages. Tobi is the principal speaker of the episode, this has caused a slightly different transcription format than the usual one presented in Chapter 3.3.3: Instead of keeping together a speaker’s turn as one numbered piece regardless of length, her speech is divided into numbered turns separated by the longer pauses, to avoid transcribing the interaction as only two or three very long turns by Tobi.

**Transcript 5.1** *The platter, cycle 1**Original:**English translation:*

(0)

(0)

(0.0 Loumbi kneels in front of Tobi, watching. Tobi holds platter with l.h., 05.9 sticks awl with r.h. into platter rim to make a hole. 04.1 Doudou approaches and sit down at Tobi's left, watching.)

(0.0 Loumbi kneels in front of Tobi, watching. Tobi holds platter with l.h., 05.9 sticks awl with r.h. into platter rim to make a hole. 04.1 Doudou approaches and sit down at Tobi's left, watching.)

(1) **Tobi:** 06.4 (*teasing the girls*) **Mún ghéé díwu swiij síré lo`, à tíjw sííré dóò.** 06.5

(1) **Tobi:** 06.4 (*teasing the girls*) **Since you-pl are to stay all day watching today, you-pl will crochet all day, then.** 06.5

(Doudou watches work intently, glances at Loumbi. 07.8 Tobi threads sewing fibre through hole with some difficulty, starts tightening, 17.0 Loumbi watches intently, bending her head to get a good view. Tobi's holds the platter in front of her, slightly towards Loumbi)

(Doudou watches work intently, glances at Loumbi. 07.8 Tobi threads sewing fibre through hole with some difficulty, starts tightening 17.0 Loumbi watches intently, bending her head to get a good view. Tobi's holds the platter in front of her, slightly towards Loumbi)

(2) **Tobi:** 17.0 **Toò.** (*glances at Loumbi, 17.3 Loumbi rises and bends over Tobi*) **Ná wú será ná?** 18.8

(2) **Tobi:** 17.0 **Well.** (*glances at Loumbi 17.3, Loumbi rises and bends over Tobi*) **You did see that, right?** 18.8

(Tobi tightens the fibre, lifts r.h. away, glances to the ground [0.7])

(Tobi tightens the fibre, lifts r.h. away, glances to the ground [0.7])

**Cycle 1, turns (0–2):** As the scene starts, Loumbi has just arrived and sat down in front of Tobi, and seconds later Doudou sits down as well, watching from Tobi's left, see Fig. 5.6 on the next page. Tobi greets them both with a humorous phrase, turn (1), saying that as they are going to stay watching the whole day, they will undoubtedly crochet the whole day too. She knows perfectly well that they will be off again in a minute, having other things than crocheting to do. As they sit down, Tobi makes a hole in the platter-rim with the awl, threads the sewing fibre through it and tightens it. While tightening, she says 'Well', quickly glancing directly at Loumbi in front of her, see Fig. 5.7 on page 157. The effect is immediate: Loumbi rises and bends over Tobi's hands to see better what Tobi is doing. It is the only point at which Tobi looks directly at any of the girls in the interaction, and should be considered a fairly strong act from Tobi to draw Loumbi into the activity going on. Loumbi stays crouched over Tobi's hands for the rest of the sequence, see





Figure 5.6: Intent observation from Doudou when Tobi shows how to make a platter, turn (1).

Fig. 5.8 on page 157. Though Tobi in this way seems to mark Loumbi especially as her target, Doudou on the side stays just as intent and interested, as can be seen in Fig. 5.8.

*Too* is a Fulfulde discourse marker (originally borrowed from Hausa) used for marking sections in narrative or explanation, and also expresses acceptance, like English *Well! Good!* Its section-marking function seems to be prevalent in turn (2): as Tobi says it, she has done the basic ‘crocheting’ action of plattermaking: making a hole with the awl and putting the sewing fibre through, and is now tightening the sewing fibre. The first cycle of actions is closing as she says *Too*.

She goes on to ask if Loumbi has seen that, employing the Fulfulde question particle *na* both at the beginning and end of her question: **Toò, ná wú será ná?** An English translation is *You-sg did see that, right?*<sup>4</sup> Loumbi gives no verbal response, but she continues to look intently. Silence is a quite appropriate answer in this case. One is reminded of Bakhtin’s notion of an active responsive attitude which does not necessarily translate into a verbal rejoinder to an utterance, see 2.2.1 on page 25, (Bakhtin 1986, 68).

<sup>4</sup>The French translation is closer: *N’est-ce pas, tu as vu, non?*

Tobi bridges over from the first cycle ended with the ‘Did you see’ question by stating, in turn (3) below, that this is how crocheting is done, in a final tone as she tightens the fibre. Then she bends down to get another *bàlí* fibre, she intends to show them another aspect of plattermaking.

**Transcript 5.2** *The platter, cycle 2*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- (3) **Tobi:** 19.5 **Toò lèè dí, móówu tǐwci** (3) **Tobi:** 19.5 **Well, like this, then, one**  
**lèè. 21.7** **crochets so. 21.7**

*(21.9 Tobi bends to put down awl and take a new fibre, looks back at the platter from the ground, then follows the fibre as she brings it in position on platter. 22.1 Loumbi lifts l.h. and touch platter, withdraws as Tobi does not respond to her bid, 23.8)*

*(21.9 Tobi bends to put down awl and take a new fibre, looks back at the platter from the ground, then follows the fibre as she brings it in position on platter. 22.1 Loumbi lifts l.h. and touch platter, withdraws as Tobi does not respond to her bid, 23.8)*

- (4) **Tobi:** 22.9 **Díghée tǎkiri lèè díghée-** (4) **Tobi:** 22.9 **If then shortened like this-**  
**24.8** **24.8**

*(26.8 Tobi has fibre in place towards the hole. Loumbi stays crouched, trying to see from Tobi's perspective)*

*(26.8 Tobi has fibre in place towards the hole. Loumbi stays crouched, trying to see from Tobi's perspective)*

- (5) **Tobi:** 24.8 **Wu ka yírici lǎw`, waà** (5) **Tobi:** 24.8 **You-sg take this one, you-sg**  
**lèè fediñ-ná (Fulf). 27.6** **add (Fulf) to, so. 27.6**

*(26.8 Tobi works the fibre into its slot with r.h., l.h. holding the other fibres in place)*

*(26.8 Tobi works the fibre into its slot with r.h., l.h. holding the other fibres in place)*

- (6) **Tobi:** 29.5 **Dii ɓaɗarí lèè dí ghée-** (6) **Tobi:** 29.5 **If put in and lengthened so-**

*(30.9 Tobi bends again to the ground to take up awl and brings it to platter, 35.2)*

*(30.9 Tobi bends again to the ground to take up awl and brings it to platter, 35.2)*



Figure 5.7: A direct glance from Tobì draws Loumbi into the demonstration, turn (2).



Figure 5.8: She stays crouched over to watch how Tobì works till the end, here at turn (8).

*Original:**English translation:*

(7) **Tobi:** 34.0 -a` tɛ̃w cə̃w dɪ. Mbutùù dɪb ʒuɛ̃kɪrɪ tɛ̃`. Hm. 38.3

*(35.2 Tobi start forcing awl through rim, finally sticks it in and wiggles it to widen hole. 40.6 She leaves the awl in the hole, picks up the sewing fibre with thumb and index finger, straightens it and bend it backwards to stick it into the hole, 48.1)*

(7) **Tobi:** 34.0 -then crochet again. The platter has come back again now, hm. 38.3

*(35.2 Tobi start forcing awl through rim, finally sticks it in and wiggles it to widen hole. 40.6 She leaves the awl in the hole, picks up the sewing fibre with thumb and index finger, straightens it and bend it backwards to stick it into the hole, 48.1)*

(8) **Tobi:** 43.8 Ná wú será~`? 46.7

(8) **Tobi:** 43.8 You-sg did see that, right? 46.7

**Cycle 2, Turns (3–8):** Tobi's next teaching effort is on another aspect of crocheting: one must constantly put in new coil fibres as the earlier ones grow short. She starts this now by bending down to take up a new fibre from her heap on the ground, looking down as she does so. That licenses a little more activity from Loumbi: as Tobi bends down to take up new fibres, Loumbi touches the platter with her left hand, removing it again as Tobi looks back. It is maybe a bid for taking the platter and try out the crocheting for herself, but Tobi does not respond to it.

In turns (4–7) Loumbi points out each little subphase of the cycle. Without Tobi's actions, the sentences would be difficult to interpret: 'If then it grows small so; you-sg take this, you-sg add it so; if so, crochet again.' Understanding the sentences relies upon correct identification of the referents handled by Tobi, by paying attention to her work and to her gaze direction.

By turn (7), Tobi again forces the awl through the rim to make another sewing hole, wiggling it to widen the hole, using at least 5 seconds for this action. As she is occupied with this, she comments that the platter is regaining its shape, smiling a little. The comment falls somewhat outside the needed explanations of what she is doing, both thematically and formally. It is more like filling out the time slot opened by the necessary use of the awl.

In this cycle of acts again, it is the task that organises the talk, rather than vice-versa. The talk is important in another way, by lifting each little act to be noticed out of the general blur of actions. When the act takes longer time than the necessary talk about it, less strictly task-related comments can be added in this open slot.

Having finished the hole, picked up the fibre and started to get it into the new

hole, she ends this section as well in turn (8) by saying the same phrase of *You-sg did see that, right?* with double question particle, without *too* this time. The last question particle is also reduced in form to a High tone hung onto the normal High-Medium contour of the last syllable: **Ná wú será' ?**

Tobi uses the Fulfulde question particle *na* rather than the Nizaa equivalent, *rá*. This is a very common phenomenon in casually spoken Nizaa. She also uses Fulfulde verb *besdin-* 'add', but changed to the more Nizaa form *bedin-*.

### Transcript 5.3 *The platter, cycle 3*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

(8)

(8)

(45.4 Tobi tugs at the awl while holding fibre with 2 fingers, she leaves awl still in hole and grips fibre again, while speaking 48.5)

(45.4 Tobi tugs at the awl while holding fibre with 2 fingers, she leaves awl still in hole and grips fibre again, while speaking 48.5)

- (9) **Tobi:** 46.4 **À dīwu mḕrḗ**, [0.3] **gan' (9) Tobi:** 46.4 **So that you-pl learn, [0.3] lǝ́. [0.6] (one) says so. [0.6]**

(48.4 Tobi jerks the awl free, holds it with 2 fingers while taking fibre with index and thumb, start aiming it into the hole, 49.1)

(48.4 Tobi jerks the awl free, holds it with 2 fingers while taking fibre with index and thumb, start aiming it into the hole 49.1)

- (10) **Man:** 49.1 **Dà̀n̄ ngúr-ré́**, (50.5 (10) **Man:** 49.1 **The world should grow Loumbi giggles) 51.0 mbutúú fà̀n̄ reɛ̀n̄kírḗ. old, (50.5 Loumbi giggles) 51.0 so that the platter doesn't get lost.**

52.0 (Man laughs a little, with Loumbi. Tobi smiles as she finally gets the tip into hole 54.0)

52.0 (Man laughs a little, with Loumbi. Tobi smiles as she finally gets the tip into hole 54.0)

- (11) **Tobi:** 54.0 **Toò. [0.5] Ná dīwu (11) Tobi:** 54.0 **Well. [0.5] You-pl did see será' ? [0.8] that, right? [0.8]**

**Cycle 3 Turns (9–11)** After these task-related lines Tobi drops another comment in turn (9), commenting rather on the teaching situation itself. The tight-knit Nizaa phrase: **À dīwu mḕrḗ, gan' lǝ́**. (*So that you-pl learn, (one) says so*), seems to be some sort of byword, delivered as a punch line. A possible interpretation is that a teacher should ask if the learner has seen, thus making her observe

well. It is a good example of a traditional item used in a conversational genre context, to affect the audience (see 2.5.3). It immediately brings a comment from a man standing by watching, and it makes Loumbi giggle. The meaning of the bystander's comment is something like *Everybody should get old (like Tobi), so that the crocheted platter is not lost*.<sup>5</sup>

Tobi continues working, jerking loose the awl as she finishes turn (9), and putting the sewing fibre tip into the new hole, this takes some time again. When she has succeeded, she says **Toò. Ná díwu será-’?** ‘Well. You-pl did see that, right?’ again as in turn (2) and turn (8), only this time she uses the 2nd prs. Pl. form, thus including Doudou, and maybe the man just speaking as well.

**Transcript 5.4** *The platter, cycle 4*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- (12) 55.0 **Swiĩĩrĩ lèè dí ghéé, ná díwu** (12) **Tobi: 55.0 If then (you) see so, you-pl**  
**bug jũũkĩrĩ shiĩĩj` lèè. 59.5** **grip again the awl so. 59.5**

(55.0 Tobi removes r.h. briefly and brings it back. Brings hand back with awl held by ring- and little finger; 58.1 then beats hand outward to show how she grips awl while speaking about it)

(55.0 Tobi removes r.h. briefly and brings it back. Brings hand back with awl held by ring- and little finger; then beats hand outward to show how she grips awl while speaking about it, 58.1)

- (13) **Loumbi: 59.4 (almost inaudible) Mm.** (13) **Loumbi: 59.4 (almost inaudible) Mm.**

- (14) **Tobi: 59.5 ‘Diwa` lèè ðam ðib jĩĩkĩ** (14) **Tobi: 59.5 Coming out so (you) can**  
**dí.** **pull it out again, then.**

(58.1 Grips fibre and starts tightening, pulls the fibre tight in two tugs while speaking, 01.02.5)

(58.1 Grips fibre and starts tightening, pulls the fibre tight in two tugs while speaking, 01.02.5)

**Cycle 4, turn 12-14** There is a brief cycle here, as Tobi demonstrates her way of holding the awl. She takes away her right hand first, then brings her hand back to the platter only to make a little beat outwards again, showing how she holds the awl. It is turned and held by the three last fingers of her hand only, leaving her index and thumb free for gripping the sewing fibre. She simultaneously comments on her handhold in the second part of turn (12) **Swiĩĩrĩ lèè dí ghéé, ná díwu bug jũũkĩrĩ shiĩĩj` lèè**, *If then (you) see so, you-pl grip again the awl so*. This brings

<sup>5</sup>Patouma was not certain of how to understand the first clause, her French version was: *Le monde doit vieillir, à fin que le plat tissé ne se perde pas.*

## 5.2. LEARNING SKILLS IN MIPOM

out an almost inaudible sound of acquiescence from Loumbi. In turn (14) Tobi then pulls the fibre tight while commenting that one pulls it through again.

### Transcript 5.5 *The platter, ending*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- (15) **Tobi:** 01.02.2 **Tóò,** (*Tobi sits back*) **ná** (15) **Tobi:** 01.02.2 **Well,** (*Tobi sits back*)  
**á lèè dí ná?** 01.03.9 **it's so already, no?** 01.03.9

(01.02.5 *Tobi takes r.h. away, gives platter a brief lift, presents it*)

(01.02.5 *Tobi takes r.h. away, gives platter a brief lift, presents it*)

- (16) **Tobi:** 01.01.4 **Á rí lèè dí.** 01.01.6 (16) **Tobi:** 01.01.4 **It is so already.** 01.01.6

(01.06.2 *Loumbi takes platter and looks, it slips from her fingers to the ground, she picks it up again, 01.11.9*)

(01.06.2 *Loumbi takes platter and looks, it slips from her fingers to the ground, she picks it up again, 01.11.9*)

- (17) **Doudou:** 01.07.6 **Yéjw lów` hááj** (17) **Doudou:** 01.07.6 **That thing, even in**  
**gùr jer mí law` wawìn` nìwà fá.** **ten years I will not get to know it.**

- (18) **Loumbi:** 01.10.1 (*high pitch*) **Wóí!** (18) **Loumbi:** 01.10.1 (*high pitch*) **Wóí!**  
(*normal pitch*) **Law` á mí tutòjw fá.** (*normal pitch*) **That's not my work!**

(01.11.9 *Loumbi hands platter back to Tobi*)

(01.11.9 *Loumbi hands platter back to Tobi*)

- (19) **Tobi:** 01.12.5 (*laughs, with girls*) (19) **Tobi:** 01.12.5 (*laughs, with girls*)  
01.14.8 **Síj` bó á lèè. Síj` bó** 01.14.8 **The awl is like that. And the**  
**lów`.** **awl -here.**

(01.12.5 *Tobi takes platter and shows where to insert the awl to make the next hole. Loumbi straightens up from her crouched position*)

(01.12.5 *Tobi takes platter and shows where to insert the awl to make the next hole. Loumbi straightens up from her crouched position*)

- (20) **Tobi:** 01.17.8 **Úhúm.** 01.18.6 *Every-* (20) **Tobi:** 01.17.8 **Úhúm.** (01.18.6 *Every-*  
*body remain in their positions for a lit-* *body remain in their positions for a lit-*  
*tle while. bk says Tóò. Tobi repeats* *tle while. bk says Well. Tobi repeats*  
**Úhúm`.** *Somebody calls to the girls for* **Úhúm`.** *Somebody calls to the girls for*  
*their original errand, Doudou answers* *their original errand, Doudou answers*  
*and they leave.* *and they leave.)*



**Ending, Turns (15-20)** The session ends. Again Tobi uses *Tóò* ‘Well’ to mark an endpoint, at the same time sitting back a little and thus signaling the ending also with her body configuration. She makes again a doubly marked question in turn (15): *Tóò, ná á lèè dí ná?*, more or less *Well, it’s so already, no?* and presents the platter to Loumbi, answering her own rather rhetorical question by stating in turn (16) that *It is so already*. Loumbi takes the platter and looks, it slips from her fingers, but she quickly picks it up again. Doudou makes the first verbal reaction to the demonstration, saying that she will never learn that even in ten years. Loumbi follows suit with her little exclamation of dismay, stating that this is not her kind of work.

The girls’ reaction at the end of the demonstration is curiously negative. Though the two girls seem genuinely interested, their interest is maybe dampened as they realise just how much work making a presentable platter will be. One effect of these reactions is of course that Tobi’s expert skills are emphasized, as the girls acknowledge that the work that she knows how to do is really difficult. The deeper meaning of the bystander’s comment in turn (9) is perhaps that old people are needed to do plattermaking, as they are patient enough and wise enough to do it, not like young girls flitting from one thing to the next. In any case, Tobi is not visibly perturbed by their reaction, she laughs and comments that the awl (work) is like that, and then places the awl neatly on the platter with the point towards the rim, holding it for me to film. A few seconds later somebody calls and the girls are off again on their original errand.

### 5.2.3 Intent participation as learning mode

The situation described above is slightly different from the ordinary learning of skills by participating in everyday practices. In the first place it has a different rationale: there is hardly any direct gain for the two girls in learning how to make traditional platters. In fact, it is possibly an art dying out with the old who still know it, as the young ones tend to buy their kitchen things, not make them. The situation is thus not tied to direct results in the same way as say, implicitly learning to cook by helping your mother to make your breakfast.

What happens here is rather a quite explicit teaching-learning situation, of *túŋ nicíré* ‘teaching somebody’, where an expert teaches a skill to learners, with both parties conscious of it as such. The Nizaa verb *túŋcíré* means both to show and more specifically to teach. To teach some specified person, a verbal chain is used, *túŋ nicí nù lăw* ‘teach-give this person’, by adding the verb ‘give’. The use of ‘give’ indexes an active receiving; one cannot give anything to somebody totally unresponsive (Kjelsvik 2002, 107). Tobi is clearly instructing the two girls on how to carry out the crocheting, and they seem genuinely to be receiving, that is, trying to learn it. What are the characteristics of the situation, and how is



language used for instruction and learning?

The most striking feature of the interaction is the small amount of spoken as compared to nonverbal interaction. Joint attention is the most prevalent feature of the interaction, rather than shared verbal communication. Tobi, while being almost the only speaker, does not give long-winded explanations of what she is doing, instead she draws the attention to certain acts and phases of her work. What Tobi does is as much part of teaching as the words she uses: it is really teaching by demonstration, with speaking integrated in and organised by the nonverbal action (Goodwin 2000).

Even more striking is the almost complete silence of the girls as they watch. There is the barest sketch of a *mm* from Loumbi once (turn (13)), and she giggles at the man's commentary in turns (9-11), otherwise she and Doudou keep quiet till the end. Still, the video shows that they are closely involved in Tobi's activity, watching very intently.

The use of *intent participation* has been singled out as an important learning mode in many cultural communities (Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chavez & Angelillo 2003). The processes of guided participation generally let youngsters or newcomers participate in the practice at hand, guiding them as they work on their present level of competence. Intent participation changes the newcomers' role somewhat. Instead of barging into active participation, the newcomer is encouraged to watch first. By intently watching and listening-in to more skilled people carrying out an activity, novices learn how to do it themselves. When they finally start to actually carry out the practice, they know quite well what to do and how to do it, from keen observation of experts. Such intent participation is different from casual and incidental observations. Intent participation has a view to future direct participation in the activity going on, and in this way it uses *observation as an aspect of participation* (Rogoff et al. 2003, 178). It seems to be this kind of observation that the girls employ here. They do not just casually observe, but very intently follow Tobi's every movement, as if they expect to reproduce her activity later.

The intent participation mode is indexed also by Tobi's comments as she works. She ends the first three cycles of crocheting by asking if the girls 'have seen'. In the fourth cycle she tells them to look at how she holds her awl. Watching like they do here is vitally important to learn a skill like this, much more maybe than we realise at first.

The byword that Tobi employs in turn (9) is interesting in this respect as well. She seems to refer to her own use of **Wu será na?** 'Did you see that?' questions, saying that it is important to ask so in order to help learners to learn. It shows that she and other Nizaa are aware of the use of intent observation for learning, and that this awareness has been reified in a set phrase.

### 5.2.4 Abstracting a schema

What we see used in Tobi's demonstration of the skill of plattermaking is two schemas, or speech genres, for teaching and learning respectively.

The interaction transcribed in Transcripts 5.1–5.5 can be described as a sequence of discourse spaces, continuously updated by Tobi's talk and actions as her demonstration proceeds. Four cycles of actions are ended by a question about 'having seen'. A visual representation of a schema of these recurring commonalities of several usage events can be made by using the Viewing frame from the larger schema of the Current Discourse Spaces (CDS), presented earlier in 2.5.1 on page 39 and 5.1.1 on page 142.

In any discourse situation of face-to-face interaction, the interaction is grounded in the physical presence of the participants, here Tobi as the Teacher T and Loumbi and Doudou as the Learners, L1 and L2. The other persons present also participate, but not directly in the role of Learners, they are bystanders. The platter, the awl, the heap of *bàli* fibres and Tobi's hands as she works are part of the discourse situation as well. As this is a teaching situation, the discourse space also contains Tobi's specialised knowledge of the skill of plattermaking, not shared by the Learners. They do, however, all three share the knowledge of the unfolding discourse as a teaching situation, and therefore both Tobi and the girls use speech genres belonging with such a situation.

The Viewing frame from the CDS schema presented in Fig. 5.1 on page 145 shows that there is focused attention from both T and L on the content of T's knowledge, brought about by the usage of linguistic expressions. Extracting the successive viewing frames from the larger discourse space as it is continuously updated, we can follow an interaction through time, also in the interaction presented here. The point of interest in this case, however, is not every detail of the unfolding discourse as such, but the schema which can be abstracted from the recurrent commonalities of these several usage events. Fig. 5.9 on the facing page depicts such an abstracted Viewing frame schema, showing a speech genre of teaching as used by Tobi in the described interaction.

The schema in Fig. 5.9 shows the several conceptualisation and vocalisation channels of the linguistic schema. The interacting parties of T and L and the objects handled are present not only in the Ground, but in the conceptualisation of the interactant as part of the Objective situation. The acts which are demonstrated as part of the skill taught, are present both as Segmental content (a vocalisation channel) and as Objective situation (a conceptualisation channel).

By being publicly visible and audible, the content of the viewing frame is shared by T and L, it is not a representation of the T's conceptualisation only. The same participants and objects will be present in the the Learners' conceptualisation, together with the acts carried out by the Teacher, *to the extent*

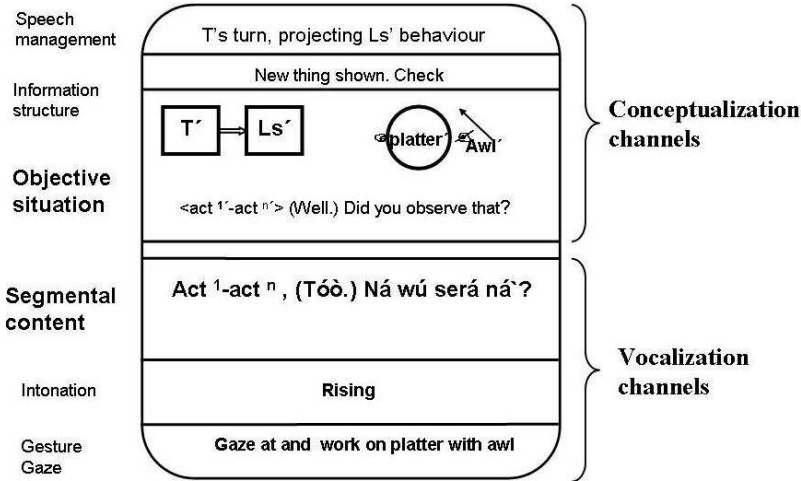


Figure 5.9: A schema for plattermaking skill demonstration

*that they are apprehended as belonging to the skill taught.* If the Learners succeed in conceptualising the same acts as the Teacher demonstrates, they can learn how to do it for themselves. If not, the teaching will fail and a further demonstration will be needed. This is why Tobi asks so consistently about having seen.

In the present case, then, the acts Tobi carries out in each cycle is part of both the vocalisation channel of Segmental content and conceptualised as part of the Objective situation. The Segmental content of the schema specifies both the necessary acts on the platter, and the question about having seen, which draws attention to the necessity of observing intently. It is a feature of teaching by demonstration quite likely to occur in other such interactions as well.

Fig. 5.9 shows in this way a possible teaching speech genre as an abstraction of commonalities in the four cycles of the plattermaking demonstration. To make it more general, the platter and awl can be changed with a more abstract notion of 'object', while a succession of abstract 'acts' and a 'having seen'-question can be retained for use in many similar situations. The interaction of Tobi and the girls is the clearest illustration of a teaching situation recorded in my data, but I observed and participated in other situations with a similar setup. While there most likely will exist other schemas of teaching-talk for demonstrations as well, the schema presented here is a plausible Nizaa teaching speech genre.

The corresponding speech genre of the Learners in this discourse situation is different, mostly by being the same over a long stretch of time. The response used

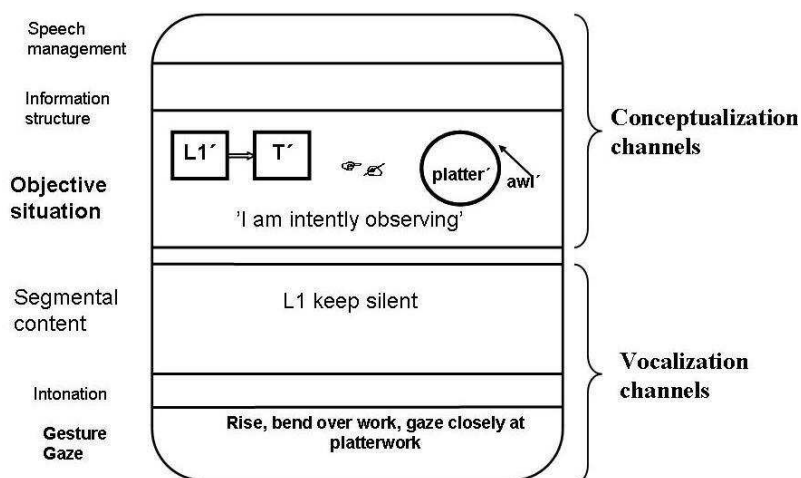


Figure 5.10: Expressing observation of plattermaking demonstration

here by the Learners is non-verbal: they simply keep quiet and watch. Loubi, directly targeted for learning by Tobi in the first cycle changes her body position in order to watch better. Her act can be depicted in a Viewing frame of the discourse situation, see Fig. 5.10.

In the rest of the interaction, the girls continue to express their keen observation simply by holding their positions and gazing at what Tobi is doing, while keeping quiet. An abstraction of their communicative behaviour over most of the interaction recorded would be almost like Fig. 5.10, except the ‘rise up and bend over’ part of the Gesture/Gaze channel. Accordingly a more general schema for this learner’s speech genre for a skill demonstration would simply be silence and gaze direction on the vocalisation side, and ‘observing’ and the relevant participants, acts and objects observed, on the conceptualisation side.

### Other talk

We saw that the expert may comment more precisely on smaller parts of the task, as in Transcript 5.2 on page 156. This talk, as well as the placement of the ‘Did you see that?’ question, is timed by the flow of actions being shown. The talk serves to make more salient the smaller parts of the action.

Another kind of talk may also be used in this kind of teaching situation, when some work subtask takes time, but does not really need further commentary in

itself. Then more general comments or other observations can be inserted.

Both of these kinds of talk, down to some specific wordings, are likely to become entrenched in schematic form if constantly used in teaching situations. Again I do not have enough data to say much about how widespread such a schema can be.

## 5.3 Nizaa children's peer culture

From the focused teaching and learning activity in the preceding section, I shall now approach a quite different learning environment in the village setting. I have already touched upon the importance of traditional oral literature, in citing Noye's work on language teaching pastimes, see 2.7 on page 56. While I did not find exactly that kind of phenomena in the Nizaa context, I did stumble upon a rich trove of children's cultural expressions during my fieldwork in Mipom, as exemplified in the field journal excerpt below. The social games played by the children contain many speech genres which the children can draw upon for learning verbal skills, alongside enacting cultural themes.

*6th February 2006*

A warm moonlit evening in Mipom the cousins of the children in 'my' household came to visit, their parents being away. They started playing games, and soon other children from the surrounding compounds trickled in until some twelve or fourteen kids were engaged in riddle games, song games and other activities, clearly enjoying themselves thoroughly. I brought out a chair to sit and watch them, the moon shining so bright that I could see well enough to take a few notes.

Later that week when the moon grew to a full, children several nights congregated somewhere outside to play, the sound of their songs and laughter floating on the air. This was how I discovered the rich peer culture still alive among the children in Nizaa villages, though seemingly disappearing from larger centers such as Galim.

### 5.3.1 Peer group culture

The peer group, the locally interacting group of children, forms an important community of practice for children. Such groups should be considered local peer cultures, perhaps quite indistinguishable from the group of kids in the next street, but not necessarily so. Even in a small village such as Mipom there probably

were several smaller groups of children based on neighbourhoods and regularly playing together, rather than one large group.

The notion of children's peer culture is in one way a natural extension of the view of childhood as a social structural category (see Corsaro (1997) and also 6.4 on page 232). On one hand, then, those falling within the category of childhood have their ways of doing things based on the constraints and opportunities offered them by this structural form. On the other hand, the notion of peer culture also signals the fact that children creatively produce their own cultural expressions in the collective interpretive reproduction of culture always going on in a community (Corsaro 1997, 30). Corsaro (1997, 95) defines children's peer culture as "a stable set of activities or routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers".

It is possible to divide childhood into age groups and investigate different agerelated peer cultures such as preschoolers (0-7 years of age) and preadolescents (7-13 years of age), especially in the context of the quite strongly age-segregated Western societies. In non-Western societies the difference between the peer cultures of preschoolers and preadolescents may be less clearcut than in the West, as noted by Corsaro (1997). I consequently keep them together and speak of children's peer culture rather than specifying preschool and preadolescent peer culture in the context of my data.

### **Types of peer culture in my data**

There are different types of children's peer culture in my data. The first type is not strictly speaking children's culture, but simply ordinary situations of interaction with children involved. In everyday life, what do the community expect of children, and what do children do? Some of this is described in chapter 4, and in the previous section of 5.2.

Another type of peer culture pertains to children engaging in solitary or small group play with objects, e.g. setting up a make shift doll house in a corner of the yard. I observed such play a few times, but it did not seem to be a very common activity among the children's group I studied.

Quite more important were the social games profiled in the introduction to this section. They were regularly played by the children, typically on moon-lit nights. Some of the games were based on verbal scripts, others had a stronger aspect of physical display. With the aid of my research assistant Patouma, I organised two sessions of recording social games in daytime, as it was too dark to film spontaneous events in the evenings. The sessions in this way also became occasions of adults teaching the children, as some of the women actively took part in organising them. These recordings are the main object of discussion of the present section, 5.3.

Riddle games and story telling are staples of Nizaa verbal practices. There are common sets of riddles taught to children; riddle games constitute both an adult-child and an adult-adult activity, and are not confined to child play. The Nizaa have a rich store of narratives and tales as well. These may be told by adults to an adult audience or to a mixed audience of children and adults. Stories and riddles are considered as containing lessons of value to the young, but they are told just as much for fun as for teaching.

Most of my data on tales and riddles come from three occasions of my language assistant telling stories in three different classes at the Group 2 school in Galim, where the majority of the students were Nizaa. I also recorded a session in a Nizaa women's association meeting in Tignère where I asked them to tell stories, thus obtaining an adult setting outside school for storytelling.

#### **5.3.2 Games as transmission of cultural knowledge**

The study of children's games in Western societies has traditionally been the province of folklore studies and ethnography, rather than linguistics. The folklorists' interest is understandable as games often are handed down through the generations and contain traditional material in different forms. Games clearly may be considered part of the language socialisation process, where children come to acquire the tools necessary for living in their sociocultural environment. In games, as in other forms of interaction, children are shown how to use language, together with other cultural patterns and routines. Games are consequently in many societies taught actively to the children by parents or other adults. Playing games is in this way a transmission of cultural knowledge, which becomes part of the resources that children draw on in their socialisation process.

Games and plays of different kinds may be actively constructed to teach language skills. An example from Cameroun of verbal games used in this way is found in the work of Dominique Noye, (Noye 1971). He describes how riddles, tales and verbal games were used to teach children verbal skills in Maroua, training them in the morphological alternances and other grammatical fine points of Fulfulde. Writing of schooling and instruction in Maroua only twenty years later, Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek (1994) already deplore the loss of these games in the urban milieu.

In the case of Mipom, one informant recalled how in her own childhood in the 70s, games were played almost every evening unless it was raining, while today it is clearly less frequent. When she was small, adult women often were around when the children played, correcting the way the game was done when they deemed it necessary, though not entering the game themselves. Adult men could do the same thing, but then any grown women present would move away. In any case, there was more control on the practice of games, with adults as

established authorities guiding the play. In the cultural community of some thirty years ago, at least, these children's games had conventional forms upheld by the community as a whole and deemed important enough to be worth adult interest in their correct execution. This seems to be a much less pronounced feature of children's games today. In the opinion of my informant, some of the games were not played correctly by the children during the recordings I made, showing both the concern of an adult that games should be played in certain ways, and that adults seem to use less time and effort with their children as they play their games nowadays.

There is no reason to think that such games as I observed in Mipom do not exist in other ethnic groups in Cameroun. In many cases the same games will probably be found over larger areas, though with local variants. The verbal parts may exist in different languages, though nonsense words do not have to change. Original other languages may of course be an explanation of the nonsense words in the first place. Though I did not have the opportunity to really check for knowledge of games in other ethnic groups, at a later occasion a young *Dii* girl saw the recordings and recognised some of the games. She responded particularly to Game 5 –Choosing one's spouse (see p. 179), recognising sitting in a row with outstretched legs and the different stages of the game, but the verbal script seemed to be quite different in the *Dii* language version, having nothing to do with the marriage theme of the *Nizaa* game.

### 5.3.3 Games as expressions of children's peer culture

While acknowledging that children's games are transmitted from generation to generation, we should be aware of the fact that games usually are transmitted not by parents, but by other children. In the *Nizaa* context, children learn games first and foremost from each other, in playing them, adult supervision or not. The groups of children playing together typically contain children of different ages, to some extent translating into roles of core members and newcomers. Older children in their playing continuously socialise new youngsters into knowing the games, in the way a community of practice normally works. This means that games, as other practices, can be *expected* to change as members of the peer groups slowly change, newcomers entering from below and teenagers leaving at the other end.

There may also be new participants coming from other places and other ethnic groups, as there is quite a bit of demographic movement in Cameroon, even in the countryside, as noted in 4.4. These children may enter the practice not only as toddlers, but at any age. A new family in the village may bring in new games, or make the old ones less popular, and the language used in playing may be changed to accommodate the newcomers.

Any group of children interacting on an everyday basis, can be seen as a



### 5.3. NIZAA CHILDREN'S PEER CULTURE

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local peer culture. They will participate in society with their own concerns and priorities, and creatively handle both constraints and opportunities offered them by adults (Corsaro (1997), see also Mcnee (2004)). They are thus not simply enacting whatever games are handed down to them from earlier generations of Nizaa children, but reproducing these scripted interactions in their own way. Themes and practices will change in the games, as new groups of children interpret them. Neither is socialisation only a unidirectional process, making children replicas of the adults around them. Children may well make a difference in the larger community processes going on. For one thing, children are to some extent allowed to choose whether they will attend school or not, and their choice will have an impact on the activities of the family unit as a whole.

#### **Interactional rights and obligations**

In game situations such as described later, there were characteristic ways of interacting verbally within games and in gameplaying settings, as well as verbal interaction to instruct and to learn.

Looking first at the larger setting of game playing, we see that it is marked on one hand by the orderly structure imposed by the game. When the children were playing a game, they used their competence at the game to proceed in order, more or less strictly following the common standard of behaviour for each game. There are often neatly placed adjacency pairs of question and answer in repeated sequences carried out by the participants ordered in some physical pattern such as a circle or a line. On the other hand, this order was broken up in moments of much less orderly interaction, before and after the game, and occasionally within it in the shorter suspensions of the game. Some games were also inherently unruly in parts, such as the kicking session of Game 3 on p. 176.

When not playing there was squabbling and milling about of the children, and no ordered turntakings to hear everybody's opinions on for example what game to play next, or what to do. However, each time one of the adults present intervened, all the children seemed to pay more attention immediately. Older children also seemed to 'get through' the din better than younger children. As a general observation, then, one can see a tendency to a quite 'democratic' interactional pattern when the participants are more or less equal in age and status, and a pattern of deference to older or adult participants if they decide to put in a word.

#### **5.3.4 Games observed**

As noted above, I had two recording sessions of games during my fieldwork period in the small village of Mipom. The first recording session took place

in the afternoon of 11th February, the National Youth Day.<sup>6</sup> In the morning the school children had performed a procession in school uniforms, with songs, dances and drill movements on the plaza in front of the assembled village. Now in the afternoon they had changed back into their ordinary clothes, but some of the holiday atmosphere was still there. Seeing that there were some visiting children in the compound in the late afternoon, I took the opportunity to ask them to join with the household children and play some games for me to record.

Seeing the importance of these games as arenas of learning for the children, I organised another recording session two weeks later, on a Friday morning when there was no school. Even more children came along at this occasion. As this session was better planned, I used a larger neighbouring courtyard and prepared a microphone on a long stick, to get closer audio recordings while maintaining enough distance to film the whole group of players. I had Issa, a boy of seventeen, to act as sound technician, holding the microphone pole more or less over the active players; this considerably improved the quality of the recordings. It still proved very difficult to actually transcribe all of the sessions, as there is much commotion and interaction going on simultaneously. Many of the games have songs with catchy tunes; this is unfortunately also impossible to convey in the written format of the present study.

In working on these data, my research assistant Patouma was a key person, both because she as a native speaker of Nizaa could interpret interaction which completely eluded me, and also because she was my chief means of contact with village life, through her close relations with what became my host family on the five-week fieldwork stay. She prepared a list of the games with transcriptions and translations of words as she herself knew them, and we worked together out a commentary on the games recorded. Based on these notes and on the recordings themselves, I give a short presentation of 9 different games in 5.3.4. A closer analysis of one of the recorded games will be given in 5.3.5.

Other important people in these recordings, both as players and as helpful organisers, are the members of my host family. It consisted primarily of Maayí<sup>7</sup> and her children. She was about 30 years old and married as first wife to Baba, but both he and his second wife were not present for most of my stay, they were working in another village about 7 or 8 km away. The children of the compound were Maayí's niece Sala, 11 years, her son Manja 11 years, her daughters Halima, 6 years, and Asta, 1 year and 7 months. Patouma's daughter Linda Yóghamtáá, 3 years, was also part of the household during our stay.

Some further games than the ones below were played in the recording sessions,

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<sup>6</sup>A description of school festival days is provided in Chapter 7.

<sup>7</sup>The names from Mipom are anonymized, changed to either common names of the area or to made-up names.

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but I have not included them here as there were less verbal scripts involved in playing them. Other games were also played that first night when I became aware of their existence, but my notes are not good enough to bear presentation of those games here. All in all there was a rich reservoir of games in use among the Mipom children, providing both good entertainment of an evening, teaching aspects of how to be Nizaa and giving practice of speech genres. The groups playing these games should be considered age-bounded communities of practice steadily acquiring new members from below, by carrying out the practices of the game.

#### **Résumé of the recorded games**

I have chosen to give a fairly full résumé of the recorded games in this chapter. One reason to do so is the use of some of the material in my analysis of one particular game, and issues of language choice coming up in the language used for playing. The most important reason, however, is the wish to document what I take to be an important part of Nizaa children's life. I have found very little in the way of such documentation from other groups in Cameroon, and not much from other African countries. Seeing the dearth of publications treating such games, I have included the games below, for what it is worth.

The first recording session covered five different games, the second repeated four of these and added some more. Patouma gave a short résumé with verbal script of some ten of the games recorded, with the words normally used in each case, as she remembered them from her own childhood. These were in many instances more or less different from the words used by the present generation, though clearly related. In some cases there is a present-day tendency to use Fulfulde instead of Nizaa (see 5.3.5), in others it seems that the Fulfulde version is older. The differences between older and newer versions show how the local peer culture have transformed the material inherited from earlier generations into their own reproduction of these cultural expressions.

Fulfulde will here be written with tones, though it is normally considered an accent language rather than a tone language. In the Adamaoua dialect, however, there are quite persistent tonal patterns in use, with two tone levels, High and non-High.<sup>8</sup> These crop up in Patouma's transcription of Fulfulde words and phrases, though some of the tones here seem to be linked to the melody of the song in which they appear (see e.g. the repetitions of the word *ndiiru* in Game 2 on the next page). On the other hand, the tonal patterns of the two corresponding questions *Asée a wááwi?* *So then you know it?* and *Asée a waawáy?* *So then you don't know it?* in the same game are examples of the common Adamaouan way

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<sup>8</sup>Rolf Theil, personal communication.

of pronouncing positive and negative verbforms respectively.

**Game 1 — Asking for fire:** The game is aimed at both verbal cleverness and showing off physical strength, in two stages. In the first stage, the players form a circle holding hands. One person is in the middle, he or she takes the role of a woman who comes to ask for fire so that she can light her own cooking fire. She should ask each player in the circle to give her fire, and the question is also always addressing a woman, using ‘big sister’ (*dii*) as address term. The roles’ gender are based on the fact that among the Nizaa, it is the women who cook. The asker should use a handful of straw as prop and hold it towards each player as ‘she’ asks about fire. This is also a realistic depiction of the everyday situation of lighting fires: a handful of straw from the nearest cottage roof is often used as kindling.

**Verbal script:**

Asker: **Díí, mi yéé raa.**

– ‘Sister, I want some fire.’

Player 1: **Mi suuasáwú mí dǒǒŋ raá ǵirá`, fàǵŋ díí yíré`.**

– (No), I’ve put my sauce to cook on the fire, lest sister steal some.’

Asker: **Díí, mi yéé raa.**

– ‘Sister, I want some fire.’

Player 2: **Mi ǵaǵawu mí ǵaǵw` raá ǵirá`, fàǵŋ díí yíré`.**

– (No), ‘I’ve placed my pumpkin on the fire, lest sister steal some.’

Asker: **Díí, mi yéé raa.**

– ‘Sister, I want some fire.’

Player 3: **Mi nyàǵŋ á raá ǵirá`, fàǵŋ díí yíré`.**

– (No), ‘My meat is on the fire, lest sister steal some.’

The persons asked always refuse, with different variants accusing the asker to try and steal some item of food put to cook on the fire. The asker finally gives up after having been refused by the whole circle. The next stage then consists of the asker trying to break out of the circle by throwing herself at the joined hands of the children around her. When she succeeds, another person start again from the beginning by asking for fire. There are words also for this part of the game, but most of them are nonsense words with no meaning outside the game. The asker defies or challenges the other players trying to keep her in, by saying “Óó baa dii!”, they answer “Baa dinggi, dinggi, dinggi”. See 5.3.5 on page 183 for a further description of this part and a more thorough analysis of meanings produced.

**Game 2 — The pivoting game:** This game is mostly about showing good motor ability, though a song belongs with the game. Standing in a circle, the players one by one pivot, that is, they rotate on their own axis while standing in the circle and without letting go of the hands of the players on each side. This takes some motor coordination skills and an understanding of where one's legs and arms will end up if put in certain directions.

The song is in Fulfulde and sung as a solo with refrain. The solo calls the name of the next player to pivot, and the other players answer with the refrain "Ndiiru, ndííru, ndiiru," 'Pivot, pivot, pivot.' After each pivot, the solo comments on whether the player has succeeded in turning correctly or not.

**Verbal script:**

Solo: **Bààppín` ndííru!**

– Bààppín,` pivot!'

Circle: **Ndiiru, ndííru, ndiiru`**

– 'Pivot, pivot, pivot.'

Solo: **Ndiirú mi láára!**

– 'Pivot, I'll see!'

Circle: **Ndiiru, ndííru, ndiiru`**

– 'Pivot, pivot, pivot.' (the player carries out the pivoting)

Solo: **Aséé a wááwi?**

– 'So then you know it?' (if pivot is correctly done)

Circle: **Ndiiru, ndííru, ndiiru`**

– 'Pivot, pivot, pivot.'

Solo: **Aséé a waawáy?**

– 'So then you don't know it?' (if pivot is failed)

Circle: **Ndiiru, ndííru, ndiiru`**

– 'Pivot, pivot, pivot.'

Solo: **(Name) ndííru.**

– '(Name), pivot!'

The game goes on till all the players have had a go at turning correctly.

When the children played this game the first session, the negative answer was not used at all, though only one player managed to do the turning

correctly. The others did turn in a way, but most let go of the hands of their co-players. In the second session, both the positive and the negative response were used. Three nomadic Fulbe boys tried to participate, but they had no notion of how to do the pivoting, though the song was in Fulfulde. They had been living in the village for a few weeks only, and were clearly not used to playing this or other games as yet.

**Game 3 — Kicking Granny Jaaloó:** The game consists of a song sung by the players dancing in a circle with joined hands, again in the form of a solo performed by one player and a refrain sung by the others. At the end of the song the circle erupts into a kicking session where everybody tries to kick the other players without getting too many kicks themselves. The song is mostly in Nizaa, with some nonsense words in the opening lines, and the final sentence in Fulfulde.

**Verbal script:**

Solo: **Sáságo.**

Circle: **Mbàlà sá.**

Solo: **Á lòòwà, lòòwà.**

– ‘Running, running.’

Circle: **Mbàlà sá.**

Solo: **Pa tamkiwú lèè.**

– ‘Pressing hard like that.’

Circle: **Wàà Jaaloó.**

– ‘Granny Jaaloó.’

Solo: **Nàw lùùŋ loo ko towu gbiŋ fààŋ.**

– ‘These people ran all along behind the village.’

Circle: **Wàà Jaaloó.**

– ‘Granny Jaaloó.’

Solo: **Nàw lùùŋ loo ko towu ŋgám fààŋ.**

– ‘These people ran all along behind the hilltop.’

Circle: **Wàà Jaaloó.**

– ‘Granny Jaaloó.’

Solo: **Nàw lùùŋ loo ko towu 6óŋ nùùŋ.**

– ‘These people ran all along the riverside.’

Circle: **Wàà Jaaloó.**

– ‘Granny Jaaloó.’

Solo: **Nàw làùŋ ndónj lèè mi ndónj lèè.**

– ‘These people passed by so, I passed by so.’

Circle: **Wàà Jaaloó.**

– ‘Granny Jaaloó.’

Solo (in Fulfulde): **Ndikka látaa mi láta.**

– ‘Better you should kick, I should kick.’

Circle: **Wàà Jaaloó.**

– ‘Granny Jaaloó.’

The last solo phrase is in Fulfulde, while the rest of the song is in Nizaa. On hearing the last phrase, the kicking session starts, with much laughing and screaming, some people flee, others pursue, and a number of players are soundly kicked in their legs, but giving back as best they can.

The phrase in Fulfulde is an interesting case of mingled traditional and present-day scripting of a game. It also shows that any clear-cut division of the material in earlier Nizaa forms and present-day Fulfulde forms is oversimplistic.

Patouma speaks Adamaouan Fulfulde well, but she has never learnt to write it properly. She transcribed the sentence as *Dikà lááta mi lááta*, but the forms are certainly not correct, as e.g. the verb ‘to kick’ is *latugo*, not *laatugo* which means ‘to become’.

Patouma translated the sentence into French as “jusqu’à arriver au botte-botte”, in English more or less ‘till one comes to the (reciprocal) kicking’, after all the running in the previous turns. A possible version of the Fulfulde phrase is *Ndikka látaa mi láta*, with 2nd person singular subjunctive form with postfixed subject pronoun in the first verb (*lát-aa*) and 1st person singular in the second (*láta*) after the free form subject pronoun *mi* ‘I’. Together with the introductory particle *ndikka* ‘it is better’, the translation becomes “Better you should kick, I should kick”, introducing the reciprocal kicking session. Verbforms with suffixed subject pronouns are somewhat archaic and seldom used in the Adamaoua dialect.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, in both of the recorded versions of this game, the sentence has been changed to *Ndikka mi láta mi láta*, “Better I should kick, I should kick”. The subjunctive is still present, but the reciprocity has disappeared with the suffixed subject pronoun of the archaic 2nd prs. sg. form.

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<sup>9</sup>Rolf Theil, personal communication.

In her original written version, Patouma had not signaled much awareness of the archaic forms, though she clearly had an idea of the reciprocity involved in the phrase (which also is fairly obvious from the practice accompanying the words). The latest version as sung by the children of today has taken the process a bit further, reinterpreting the phrase from a reciprocal to a singular 1st person meaning. It is tempting to think that the archaic form still persisting in Patouma's version has been transmitted from earlier generations with a closer relation to older forms of Fulfulde. Today it seems to be gone, replaced by the force of a more modern Fulfulde usage.

The development sketched out above shows that it is far too simplistic simply to identify the use of Fulfulde in Nizaa games as a modern invention. In this case, the whole game may at some point have been borrowed from Fulfulde-speakers. In the present version, then, most of the script has been transferred to or recast in Nizaa, leaving only this key phrase of the game in Fulfulde, introducing the break from dancing in a circle to the fun part of kicking all and anyone. Even this phrase has undergone a change, however, as a new generation reinterpretes it from their knowledge of the Fulfulde language of today.

It is of course difficult to draw any conclusions on the age and origin of the game. A more thorough collection of games in different ethnic groups would possibly give more substantial data on such questions. The above analysis still gives a glimpse of the processes of a living tradition, where children may keep old turns of phrase alive for some time simply in the interest of playing a fun game, and then subtly change them.

**Game 4 — Tug of war:** The tug of war game as played by the Nizaa children formerly had an elaborate way of choosing the teams. It starts by the two anchoring persons facing each other, singing a short song with a solo and refrain-form. The words seem to be mostly nonsense words.

Solo: **Mímí dálá**

Everybody: **Kaakídi'**

Solo: **Kajĩkéeéwa.**

Everybody: **Mijúma.**

Everybody now has to pass between the two leaders who facing each other rhythmically clap their hands together in the air while chanting. At the end of the little song, the leaders bring down their arms and the person who happens to pass is caught between them. He or she has to answer whether he wants 'meat or chicken', or choose between some other pair of foodstuffs.





Player: **Nágum** (game nonsense word, 4 times)

Leader: **Wu mǎáj á níkeèŋ?**

– Who is your friend?

Player: (gives name of friend)

Leader: **Párá'** (game nonsense word, 4 times)

Player: **Nágum** (game nonsense word, 4 times)

Leader: **Wu lúúŋ/waa á níkeèŋ?**

– Who is your husband/wife?

Player: (gives a boy's name/girl's name)

The names given for their future husband or wife may of course cause laughter and amusement, but it is not normally a shameful situation.

When all the players have answered these questions, they all pose one foot on top of the other, the heel teetering on the toes. The leader then again passes from player to player, asking questions according to gender while rocking the player's feet from side to side by slapping on the sides. If it is a girl, the question asked is: **Cii búúra, cíí kòw rá?** 'Is the couscous well-cooked, or is the couscous raw?' If the feet stay in place, the leader will answer the question herself by saying **Cii búú,** 'The couscous is well-cooked.' If the feet are disconnected and fall, she will say **Cii kòw,** 'The couscous is raw.' The idea is that the girl will cook well or not for her husband.

For a boy, the question is : **Faa búúra, faá kòw rá?** 'Is the bow well-done, or is the bow raw?' Again the answer is given according to whether the player manages to keep his feet in place or not. If he succeeds, the leader says: **Faa búu,** 'The bow is well-done.' If not, it is **Faá kòw,** 'The bow is raw.' Here the idea is that the boy will hunt well or not for his wife.

The final stage then consists of the leader placing the heels of each and each player on her own feet, taking him or her by the hands, and pulling to raise him or her to an upright position. The player should rise without bending his or her knees, this is much more difficult for large and heavy players, especially if the leader is a small person. The game is over when all are standing.

**Game 6 —Danse game:** The players stand in a circle, singing a solo-refrain song. The solo line names one of the players, and the refrain responds.

**Verbal script:**

Solo (in Fulfulde): **(name) wi mi yaa waala.**

– ‘(Name) said that I should go and lie down.’

Everybody (in Fulfulde): **Eee, mi yaa waala.**

– ‘Yes, I will go and lie down.’

When each player in the circle has been named, the players start to jump on the spot. (In the recorded version, a player started jumping when there still were 2 or 3 players left to ask, and the others soon followed suit.) They start dancing, jumping twice alternatively to the left and to the right, singing:

Everybody (in Nizaa): **Duù léé léé, duù léé léé.**

– ‘Go forward like this, go forward like this.’

**Game 7 — The pumpkin game:** The players sit down one behind the other in a long row. The foremost player is a grandmother, and the others behind her represent pumpkins in her field. Another player takes the role of a lazy person. He has a stick in his hand. The grandmother sings a solo and the others chime in with the refrain, both nonsensical, before a spoken dialogue between the lazy person and the grandmother.

**Verbal script:**

Solo: **Sáámíná, sáámíná**

Everybody: **Kúunaweyná**

Solo: **Bakida, bakida**

Everybody: **Kúunaweyná**

Solo: **Bàkìdà weyna**

Everybody: **Kúunaweyná**

Lazy one: **Mi á dìwà fite`. Wàà mi yéé ñaw.**

– ‘I’ve come here.<sup>10</sup> Grandmother, I would like a pumpkin.’

Grandmother: **Màá sùu mi ñawí ló` wàà ganá à` sàáj` nuuciré ra? Ge` swiñwà, nyéñ ñawkiwuré` à ké yéé, a` kùw.**

– ‘I say, when I dug my field, didn’t you say that the earth smelled bad? Go look, if there is one that is mature, you can cull that one.’

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<sup>10</sup>This is the common introductory greeting from somebody arriving at a house.

When permission thus is given, the lazy person circles the row of ‘pumpkins’, knocking on each player’s head to hear if the pumpkin is mature yet. It is always the last pumpkin on the row which is ready to be culled. The lazy one pulls him away from the others, and the game starts all over with the singing and the asking to get yet another pumpkin.

**Game 8 — The sheep and the leopard:** One player is designated to be the leopard, another is the shepherd. The shepherd is in front of a long row formed by the other players standing behind him, with each player holding on to the waist of the one in front of him. The shepherd sings the solo and the sheep respond with a word which possibly is a deformation of the word **ḍāà**, ‘other’, where the implosive of the first phoneme has turned into a strongly sounded glottal stop.

Solo: **Sáákísárí, mum´ mum**

– ‘Only one, one, is left.’

Everybody: **?a, hé ?a**

– ‘An other, an other.’

Solo: **Mbíraarí gíná ré`**

– ‘The children are good.’

Everybody: **?a, hé ?a**

– ‘An other, an other.’

Solo: **Mún nyààṅ njèr taaṅ mún**

– ‘Today the leopard eats, today.’

Everybody: **?a, hé ?a**

– ‘An other, an other.’

The leopard then tries to catch a sheep, a quite difficult task as the shepherd always tries to face him and holds his hands out to hinder his getting close to the sheep behind him. The row of players undulates and moves rapidly as they try to evade the leopard, often with success. If the leopard does manage to break through, he will snatch off the last player of the line, and then they start again. Sometimes the catching is going so slowly that the players grow tired and change to another game.

**Game 9 — Animals with tails:** The last game to be noted here, is a physical show off-game, but it also names many animals of the bush and says something about their behaviour. The players put on make-shift tails, sticking a piece of clothing, a bit of rope, or a long piece of plastic into

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the lining of their trousers or skirts. Then they line up side by side, facing the leader. Each player says the name of the animal he or she wants to imitate, the leader must remember them. Then he chants the name of each animal to call the player forward, adding phrases of what the animal shall do. For each solo line of the leader, the players respond with a short refrain.

Solo: **Mvásí lóm mí yoo.**

– ‘The mosquito bites me, I said.’

Everybody: **Tataa ḡḡòní**

– ‘Tataa the dance.’

Solo: **Tugòr nááriná.**

– ‘The partridge should come stepping.’

Everybody: **Tataa ḡḡòní**

– ‘Tataa the dance.’

Solo: **Tugòr cim yèekiré yóó.**

– ‘The partridge should jump in turning, I said.’

Everybody: **Tataa ḡḡòní**

– ‘Tataa the dance.’

Solo: **Tugòr ge juuḡnà / ge juuḡné yoo.**

– ‘Partridge go back/should go back, I said.’

Everybody: **Tataa ḡḡòní**

– ‘Tataa the dance.’

Each player squats down and jumps forward in several small steps, then tries to jump and turn as directed. The trick is to get the tail to move well by actively moving the hips and pelvis while also keeping one's balance when jumping in a squatting position. Good performances are audibly admired by the others.

#### 5.3.5 Asking for fire, 11th February 2006

We shall have a closer look at the game of asking for fire as played in the first recording session. It is commented upon and partly transcribed below; a complete transcription is found in Appendix A.1.

The game to be treated here is a typical role-playing game, acting out a little story of a woman going to her neighbours to get fire when her own has gone out. The interaction taking place is entirely within the game world and not directly intervening in the interaction of the participants as such. For example, the persons



Figure 5.11: Turn (1): Manja asks Pl.2 for fire, moving to his left. Asta is visible in the circle behind him, Ibi is standing by the wall. Patouma at left.

asked are all addressed as ‘big sister’, regardless of whether it is a boy or a girl playing this role. Starting out with a small group of seven or eight children at first, the compound soon filled with children, as the players called for friends passing and others heard the commotion. The mother of the compound, Maayí, and Patouma, were present, and other women from the neighbourhood came later to see what was going on. The toddlers were left out of the games; the youngest participants were about six years old, though three-year old Linda was allowed in on this game, as a guest in the village.

At the setout of the game, Manja, the 11-year-old boy of the compound takes the active role of the asker. His mother is nearby, occupied with her own things just outside the kitchen hut. Patouma has seated herself close by the circle, overseeing them. Some non-playing children are present, Ibi by the wall and Ila are both a couple of years older and on this occasion refrain from joining the play, though Ibi takes some responsibility in organising the circle before he withdraws. The smallest child, Asta of 18 or 19 months, is too small to understand the idea of the game, she keeps interfering by traipsing about the players and especially her big brother Manja. Two or three other kids also below school age are old enough to know when to keep out of the way, but not old enough to be allowed into the game

circle.

As Magma starts his tour of the circle, he asks his question in Fulfulde: *Adda, mi yidi yiite*, 'Big sister, I want some fire.' The whole affair seems rather dispirited and stiff, and the answers from the other players are difficult to hear, but at least Player 3 gives a somewhat long answer. Magma asks his question of five players, with his little sister Asta trailing him. Some of the players seemed quite preoccupied with her instead of the game. I tried to intervene at this point, starting to form a question on 'those too small', but nobody seemed to really pay attention. At the other side of the circle, Patouma had been joined by her daughter and now asked for a place for her as well in the game. She was duly included just as Player 5 answered the game question. At this point Maayí decides to intervene.

**Transcript 5.6** *Game 1 'Sister, I want fire', turn 9*

*Original:*

- (9) **Maayí:** 10.1 (*Maayí speaks from some distance, then comes closer and gets the players attention; speaking Nizaa*) **Nàw wam á píŋcǐ lèè dey** (Pl.1 leaves his place to fetch Asta out of the circle, Pl.2 keeps his hand outstretched waiting for him. Ibi by the wall simultaneously walks over to Linda to arrange the hands of the players holding on to her arms, then returns to his seat.) **Móówu à píŋcǐ lèè dey** (partly inaudible, several overlapping voices, she goes toward house by camera)- **móówu à píŋcǐna'**, **díí à kaŋ ní kew níci mi mboróó ré-** [0.1] (*takes a handful of straw from the roof, shouts*) **Magma, hey! Magma he!** (*walks into circle*) [1.0] **Móówu píŋcǐ lèè ðe** [0.9] (*holds up straw to Pl.2 in circle and looking straight at him, speaking Nizaa*) **"Díí, mi yéé raa."** [0.4] (*pl.2 looks away to his right*)

*English translation:*

- (9) **Maayí:** 10.1 (*speaks from some distance, then comes closer and gets the players attention; speaking Nizaa*) **One should do like this, you know!** (Pl.1 leaves his place to fetch Asta out of the circle, Pl.2 keeps his hand outstretched waiting for him. Ibi by the wall simultaneously walks over to Linda to arrange the hands of the players holding on to her arms, then returns to his seat.) **People do like this, see?** (partly inaudible, several overlapping voices, she goes toward house by camera) **-one's doing it, sister has recorded a newly invented thing(?) for me** [0.1] (*takes a handful of straw from the roof, shouts*) **Magma, hey! Magma he!** (*walks into circle*) [1.0] **One does like this, see!** [0.9] (*holds up straw to Pl.2 in circle and looking straight at him, speaking Nizaa*) **"Sister, I want some fire."** [0.4] (*pl.2 looks away to his right*)

Suddenly starting to speak, Maayí passes outside the circle and walks over to one of the huts in the courtyard, drawing the players attention to her by saying "One should do like this, you know!" This licenses a pause in the game activity.



Figure 5.12: Maayí's demonstration, turn (10). Pl.1 has left to carry off Asta

Player 1 takes the opportunity to carry Asta out of the circle, so he probably had heard and understood my comment on those too small after all, now taking the first opportunity offered to act on it. Nonplaying Ibi also immediately approaches Linda to arrange her handhold with the players next to her. Mänga just stops where he is, looking a bit disoriented. Maayí introduces verbally her intended demonstration of the game “People do like this, see?”, comments to me on the performance of the children as she passes the camera, and then rips off a handful of straw from the roof. She calls to get her son's attention, enters circle by the gap left by Pl. 1 and demonstrates how to ask the question in Nizaa: *Díí, mi yéé raa*, ‘Big sister, I want some fire’, holding the handful of straw under the nose of Player 2. The effect is immediate. Maayí gets everybody's full attention, and there is a perceptible shift to a ‘looser’ atmosphere: the children laugh and look more expectant.

**Transcript 5.7** *Game 1 ‘Sister, I want fire’, turn 10–11*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- (10) **Severál:** 22.8 (*Mänga laughs delightfully, others follow, Mänga reaches for the strawbunch in his mother's hand, she ignores him looking at Pl.2. Behind her, Pl.1 joins the gap in the circle again*)

- (10) **Severál:** 22.8 (*Mänga laughs delightfully, others follow, Mänga reaches for the strawbunch in his mother's hand, she ignores him looking at Pl.2. Behind her, Pl.1 joins the gap in the circle again*)



*Original:*

*English translation:*

- (11) **Maayí:** 24.6 (*uncertain translation*) (11) **Maayí:** 24.6 (*uncertain translation*)  
**A` wú se làà jawwú lóó raaná`**  
**fādàà, faday fādà ka dib ré`.** [0.2]  
*(shifts gaze to Pl.3, holds straw up to her)* **“Díí, mi yéé raa.”**  
**So that you see how to struggle and**  
**run about for fire, be close to, don’t**  
**be close, be close to take it and leave.**  
 [0.2] *(shifts gaze to Pl.3, holds straw up to her)* **“Sister, I want some fire.”**

Maayí explains shortly in turn (11) the idea of the game, to ‘run about for fire’, ignores Maṅga’s silent bid for her prop, and repeats the demonstration. Then she leaves them to their game, giving Maṅga the straw.

**Transcript 5.8** *Game 1 ‘Sister, I want fire’, turn 12–18*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- (12) **Patouma:** 29.2 **‘Boo nyiṅcí seena`**, (12) **Patouma:** 29.2 **They speak in Ful-**  
**à nyiṅcí à wú seena` lo`.** **fulde, they should not speak in Ful-**  
**fulde.**  
 (13) **Maayí:** 31.2 (*straightens up, gives* (13) **Maayí:** 31.2 (*straightens up, gives*  
*straw to Maṅga*) **To, à nyiṅcí à wú *straw to Maṅga*) **Okay, don’t speak in**  
**séena`.** (*Patouma overlaps, inaudi-* **Fulfulde.** (*Patouma overlaps, inaudi-*  
*ble*) [1.0] *ble*) [1.0]  
 (14) **Maayí:** 33.4 (*partly unintelligible* (14) **Maayí:** 33.4 (*partly unintelligible*  
*sentence as she crosses circle*) **Dina** *sentence as she crosses circle*), **(xx xxx**  
**wóó nitam màá mi yidí yiite.** **person I say I want fire)**  
 (15) **Maṅga:** 35.2 (*starts on Pl.1 again,* (15) **Maṅga:** 35.2 (*starts on Pl.1 again,*  
*players attention on him*) **“Adda, mi** *players attention on him*) **“Sister, I**  
**yidí yiite”=** (*answer inaudible*) **want some fire”=** (*answer inaudible*)  
 (16) **Patouma:** 36.1 (*sternly*) **=Nyin`** (16) **Patouma:** 36.1 (*sternly*) **=Speak in**  
**nízaa-na`!=** **Nizaa!=**  
 (17) **Maayí:** 36.6 (*overlapping*) **Nyin`** (17) **Maayí:** 36.6 (*overlapping*) **=Speak**  
**nyem-nyem ré`** (*leaves circle and* **Nyem-nyem!** (*leaves circle and turns*  
*turns to look*) [1.4] *to look*) [1.4]  
 (18) **Maṅga:** 38.8 (*moves over to Pl.2,* (18) **Maṅga:** 38.8 (*moves over to Pl.2,*  
*thrust the straws towards him*) **“Mi** *thrust the straws towards him*) **“I want**  
**yéé raa- Díí, mi yéé raa!”** [0.8] **fire- Sister, I want some fire!”** [0.8]  
 (19) **Pl.2 boy:** 40.5 (*makes amused snort,* (19) **Pl.2 boy:** 40.5 (*makes amused snort,*  
*looking back at him*) **“Raa fá.”** *looking back at him*) **“There is no fire.”**  
*(smiles)* [0.4] *(smiles)* [0.4]**

As Maayí leaves the circle, Patouma's remarks in turn (12) in the next transcript excerpt that they have been speaking Fulfulde (*seena*, 'in Fulfulde'), while they should speak Nizaa. Maayí agrees. Still Manga poses the question in Fulfulde again as he starts anew on Player 1, see turn (15). Both women immediately intervene with a direct order of speaking Nizaa, Patouma calling it Nizaa, while Maayí uses the name *Nyem-nyem*, see 4.4.1 on page 111.

The emphasis on speaking Nizaa at this occasion stems partly from my own presence and the recording setting. I am known in the area as a person who wants to study the Nizaa language and the authentic Nizaa way of living. My inability to understand Fulfulde was known as well.

On the other hand Patouma, as a long time worker in the Nizaa language project, is very aware of the problem of Fulfulde as a local prestige language steadily encroaching on former Nizaa language use situations. It is she who brings up the question of language here. Maayí, like many Nizaa, is bilingual to an extent where she codeswitches easily, adapting to the perceived communicative needs of any situation. Like many Nizaa she also frequently mix in Fulfulde lexical items and discourse markers in otherwise Nizaa speech; to some extent such items have lost their identification as Fulfulde items, they are simply common words. In any case, both Patouma and Maayí first frame their request somewhat indirectly as something which should be done (turns 12-13), and then as this advice is not followed, give clear orders using direct imperatives in turns 16-17.

Going on to Player 2 Manga does pose the question as his mother demonstrated it, after a false start in turn (18). Now the game continues in Nizaa, but another problem arises. The first five children just answers *Raa fã* 'There is no fire,' instead of the more elaborate refusals-with-insults belonging with this game, see the résumé of the game in 5.3.4 on page 174. Maayí intervenes again.

#### Transcript 5.9 *Game 1 'Sister, I want fire', turn 12–18*

##### *Original:*

- (26) **Maayí:** 47.8 (*speaks from outside the circle, Manga looks at her; the other players keep their attention on Manga. Pl.5 answers inaudibly during her turn*) “**Mi suu cáŋw dóŋ raaná` fã- fààŋ daw ge yíi diw-wà.**” [0.3]
- (27) **Manga:** 50.5 (*turns to Pl.6*) “**Díí, mi yéé raa!**” [0.5]

##### *English translation:*

- (26) **Maayí:** 47.8 (*speaks from outside the circle, Manga looks at her; the other players keep their attention on Manga. Pl.5 answers inaudibly during her turn*) “**I cook again my sauce on the fire, lest (you) touch go to steal from it.**” [0.3]
- (27) **Manga:** 50.5 (*turns to Pl.6*) “**Sister, I want some fire.**” [0.5]

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Figure 5.13: Giving a cheeky answer, turn (30)

Without any further introduction, Maayí gives an example of a more complex answer in turn (26). In her answer she cites her sauce as the thing put on the fire to cook, and she refuses with a *fààŋ*, ‘lest’-construction: ‘lest (you) touch go to steal from it.’<sup>11</sup> This is closer to the presumably older form of this game, cited in 5.3.4 on page 174. The next person to answer takes up her model, but using only the ‘lest’-construction at the end, slightly changed, without the first part of citing a kind of food put on the fire to cook. This truncated model is then followed by the rest of the players (as far as that is discernible), just as the first model of ‘There is no fire!’ was followed by several others.

#### Transcript 5.10 *Game 1 ‘Sister, I want fire’, turn 28–30*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(28) <b>Pl.6 girl:</b> 51.7 (<i>smiling broadly</i>) “<i>Fààŋ wu ge yí diwwà!</i>” [0.4]</p> <p>(29) <b>Maŋga:</b> 53.4 (<i>continues to Pl.7, who smiles and laughs</i>) “<i>Díí, mi yéé raa!</i>” [1.0]</p> <p>(30) <b>Pl.7 girl:</b> 55.2 “<i>Fààŋ wu ge yí diwwá!</i>” (<i>giggles</i>)</p> | <p>(28) <b>Pl.6 girl:</b> 51.7 (<i>smiling broadly</i>) “<b>Lest you go to steal from (it).</b>” [0.4]</p> <p>(29) <b>Maŋga:</b> 53.4 (<i>continues to Pl.7, who smiles and laughs</i>) “<b>Sister, I want some fire.</b>” [1.0]</p> <p>(30) <b>Pl.7 girl:</b> 55.2 “<b>Lest you go to steal from (it).</b>” (<i>giggles</i>)</p> |
|--|---|

<sup>11</sup>The clause contains both a ‘go to’-construction and two verbal chains in Nizaa, touch-go to-steal-take.out.of.

Player 6, a girl of 8 or 9 years, repeats the last part *fààŋ wu ge yíi diwà*, ‘lest you go to steal from (it),’ with evident relish in turn (28), and so does her friend in turn (30), see Fig. 5.13 on the preceding page. From the model of Maayí, the two girls have been able to pick out the most relevant part and use it to answer the plea for fire.

The answer is cheeky, and highlights the asker as a dubious person not to be trusted around other people’s food. Stealing food should be out of the question for a Nizaa child (cfr. 4.5.2 on page 120 and following page), but we may safely assume that theft of food occasionally happens here as elsewhere. The game script allows for talking about the possibility of doing it. The negative response to the possible thief is at the same time upholding the social order. And the teasing tone is fun in itself, the girls can without fear of consequences have a go at an older boy, not really accusing him of stealing anything, of course, but still seeing enough of him through the role to make it more fun.

The next person to be asked about fire is Linda, only three years old and not very fluent in Nizaa. Her mother prompts her by saying *Raa fá*, ‘There is no fire,’ from her place right behind her. Linda takes the cue immediately and repeats the phrase in turn (33).

**Transcript 5.11** *Game 1 ‘Sister, I want fire’, turn 31–35*

- | <i>Original:</i>  | <i>English translation:</i>   |
|---|---|
| (31) <b>Majga:</b> 56.9 (to Linda, bowing down) “ <i>Díí, mi yéé raa!</i> ” [0.5]   | (31) <b>Majga:</b> 56.9 (to Linda, bowing down) “ <i>Sister, I want some fire.</i> ” [0.5]  |
| (32) <b>Patouma:</b> 57.7 (sitting right behind Linda) “ <i>Raà fá.</i> ” [0.4]   | (32) <b>Patouma:</b> 57.7 (sitting right behind Linda) “ <i>There is no fire.</i> ” [0.4]   |
| (33) <b>Pl.8 Linda:</b> 58.7 “ <i>Raà fá.</i> ” [0.7] (all the girls around her have turned towards her; smiling, Majga smiles as he straightens up again, Patouma smiles behind her) | (33) <b>Pl.8 Linda:</b> 58.7 “ <i>There is no fire.</i> ” [0.7] (all the girls around her have turned towards her; smiling, Majga smiles as he straightens up again, Patouma smiles behind her) |
| (34) <b>Pl.6 girl:</b> 01.00.64 (laughingly) <b>Hn?</b>   | (34) <b>Pl.6 girl:</b> 01.00.64 (laughingly) <b>Hn?</b>   |
| (35) <b>Majga:</b> 01.00.6 (continues to his younger sister Halima, Pl.9, smiling as he asks) “ <i>Díí, mi yéé raa!</i> ”=  | (35) <b>Majga:</b> 01.00.6 (continues to his younger sister Halima, Pl.9, smiling as he asks) “ <i>Sister, I want some fire.</i> ”=   |

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*Original:*

(36) **Pl.6 girl:** 01.01.2 (*overlaps out of turn, giggling over Linda's answer, Pl.7 besides her dips nearly to the ground, laughing*) =xx **raà fá!**=

*English translation:*

(36) **Pl.6 girl:** 01.01.2 (*overlaps out of turn, giggling over Linda's answer, Pl.7 besides her dips nearly to the ground, laughing*) =xx **"There is no fire."**=

By prompting Linda to use the short answer form, Patouma ensures her daughter's participation in the game on a level which Linda is able to handle. Still, after the successful use of Maayi's new model from turn (26), Linda's answer comes across as substandard, or rather, as the answer of a very young participant doing her best. The reaction to it is one of mingled acceptance and amusement from most of the participants and bystanders, with Pl.6 repeating Linda's answer as if it really was a reason to laugh. Linda seems to be squarely in the zone of legitimate peripheral participation (see 2.1.4 and 7.1) of this group.

Player 6 is actually breaking the participation order of the game with her outburst in turn (36). Manja, however, just ignores it and continues his asking for fire. The next player is his own younger sister Halima. An interesting thing happens during her answer.

#### **Transcript 5.12** *Game 1 'Sister, I want fire', turn (37)*

*Original:*

(37) **Pl.9 Halima:** 01.01.8 (*overlapping with Pl.6, partly inaudible. Her mother has approached quietly behind her back, listens and turns away as Halima answers*) =**"ge yíí diwwà!"** [0.7]

*English translation:*

(37) **Pl.9 Halima:** 01.01.8 (*overlapping with Pl.6, partly inaudible. Her mother has approached quietly behind her back, listens and turns away as Halima answers*)=**"steal from it!"** [0.7]

As Halima gives her answer, using a similar phrase to Pl.'s 6 and 7, her mother quietly approaches behind her back, listens to her answer with a content expression and drifts away again as the game continues, see Fig. 5.14 on the following page. The little incident is a reminder that adult women still take an interest in how these games are played, wanting their own children to do well. Still, the way she quietly checks on her daughter's performance does not call attention to her or makes her out as performing better than other children. Halima herself is hardly aware of it.

The last three players repeat the 'lest you come stealing' phrase, or laughs it away; the answers of the last two are partly inaudible. Having come full circle, Manja throws his handful of straw down in the middle, moves toward the other side of the circle, facing inward and challenging the others with the words **Óó**,

**baa dii**, opening his arms, see Fig. 5.15 on page 194. The circle responds with **Ba dingi, dingi, dingi** while shuffling outwards, making the circle larger.



Figure 5.14: Maayi checking on her daughter's answer, turn (37). Pl.s 6 and 7 are still laughing at Linda's answer.

The challenge and the response are repeated once. Then Maja abruptly stops the game to correct the way two of the participants are holding hands, see Fig. 5.16 on page 194. The right way seems to be one person gripping the forearm of the next, not his or her hand. Player 1 intervenes as well and there is quite a little discussion going on for a few seconds, with children reaching to place hands correctly (see Figs. 5.13, 5.14, 5.15 for details of holding).

This is the second time during this game that the issue of holding correctly on to the other players' arms comes up. The first time was during turn (9), when the nonplayer Ibi unintrusively corrected Linda's link with the circle during the pause created by Maayi's first intervention.

There is a competence dimension involved in playing games as children grow better at carrying them out. Being good at a game skill is a way for children to show off a bit and be positively visible in a culturally acceptable way. Simultaneously a bad performance may be received with laughter and teasing without this growing into a harsh punishment, or the player feeling a complete failure. It is possibly not so bad to fail in some aspect of the game, if everybody has a good laugh from it.

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Here it is the breakout part of the game which the children are more concerned about, as the correct placing of hands seems to receive more direct attention from them than the right words and what language to use. To break out is a display of physical force, and so is the ability to contain the asker inside. Interestingly, it is the player who will be trying to break out who takes the initiative to assure good hand-holding techniques. Is it more important to him that the game is done correctly than that he should succeed because somebody did not hold onto to her neighbour as well as she should? The initiative in turn (51), and his lenience toward a weak player noted below, seem to point in this direction.

The verbal parts have been attended to by the two adults, Maayí and Patouma. They are concerned with the use of a correct verbal script and the prop traditionally belonging with this game, and in this case do not bother with the practical parts. This probably stems from the fact that the children were handling this part themselves and they intervened only when they deemed it necessary. In other games, they or other women present did demonstrate or correct the physical practices as well as the verbal scripts.

The matter of handholding resolved, Manja repeats his **Óó, baa dii**, gets the same answer, and continues with a phrase in Fulfulde **Sannu wurtataa?** 'Hello, do I not get out?' This time he is not corrected by his mother or Patouma. The circle answers in Nizaa, **Twèé má síiro**, 'Those days to stay and think.' Then he runs across the circle and throws himself on the linked arms of Pl. 1 and 2, trying to break through, see Fig. 5.17 on the next page

In this case he actually never succeeds. He tries several times, running hard at the circle in several places, but the hand-hold-arm trick seems to work and it is hard to get through. He has a go at the link between Linda and Pl. 7, however, where it would normally be quite easy to get out, Linda being so small and weak. But in this case Manja checks himself, slowing down and not really making an attempt, because Patouma tells him quite severely not to make her daughter fall over, and he complies with that.<sup>12</sup> After some further attempts the game was called off by his mother, and the children started a new game.

#### 5.3.6 Learning from games

Generally in a game situation, there is not any participant with a clearcut teacher's role and specialised knowledge. The participants are rather a mosaïque of players knowing more or less of the game and working out a common understanding of how to do things as the game unfolds. We see this for example in the incident of Manja stopping the play to arrange handholds, and in the way the players take

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<sup>12</sup>This was not directly captured in the video, Patouma told me later why Manja so suddenly slowed down the breakout attempt in this case.





Figure 5.15: Challenge of *Óó baa òii!*, turn (47)



Figure 5.16: Arranging hands, turn (51)



Figure 5.17: First breakout attempt, turn (56)



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cues from each other. The situation is more like the practicing of skills in an 'on-the-job-training' set-up than focused teaching sessions like the one treated in 5.2.2 to 5.2.4. The interventions of Maayí to demonstrate how to say certain lines of the game are direct teaching situations, however, with a more knowledgeable Teacher recognised as such by all the participants.

In the 'just playing' kind of situation there will still be learning processes going on. One is connected to the practice of cultural themes. I have already touched upon some of the underlying cultural themes of the game analysed here: the ban on stealing other people's food and the gendered roles of asker and answerer (see 5.3.4 on page 174). Another theme is to ask for something from a relative of higher status, which ties into the system of kinship obligations and rights, see 4.5.2 on page 120. Importantly, the game shows *how*, by what phrases, one can ask for such a favour and how it can be refused — it gives instances of the speech genres schemas for asking a favour and refusing it, serving as models for children to learn from. It is at these two points that Maayí intervenes as well, demonstrating the Nizaa speech genres in question.

#### Role-play and speech genres

Doing the lines in a role-play game actually has two layers of learning. The first layer concerns learning of the game itself, what to say and do in the game. Game-lines are normally practised over many game-playing sessions, and some lines are used many times within each session: this means that there are many usage events and obvious possibilities of abstracting schemas over them. However, these schemas or speech genres of the game, defined as the recurrent commonalities of many usage events, are *secondary speech genres*, related to the game world, and not directly related to the everyday world (see 2.5.3). The game world situation is often pushed to extremes in its play on cultural themes, exaggerating conflicts and behaviours, and hence the secondary speech genres of a game are made even more salient as they appear in the first layer of learning acquired in the game.

The second layer of learning from games concerns the use of *primary speech genres*, from real world situations, embedded in the game-lines. A game-line may be taken from ordinary, everyday conversations, for example when the role figures greet each other with the set phrases of greetings. Some of the virtue of playing games for children is this double practice of speech genres, gaining competence in the game and simultaneously gaining insight and competence in the real-life situation which the game plays out, making talk in real-life settings more salient and more resonant.

Looking now at potential speech genre schemas in the game of asking for fire, the obvious first candidate is the question phrase repeated for each player: "**Díí, mi yéé raa,**" 'Big sister, I want fire.' An abstracted schema of the many usage

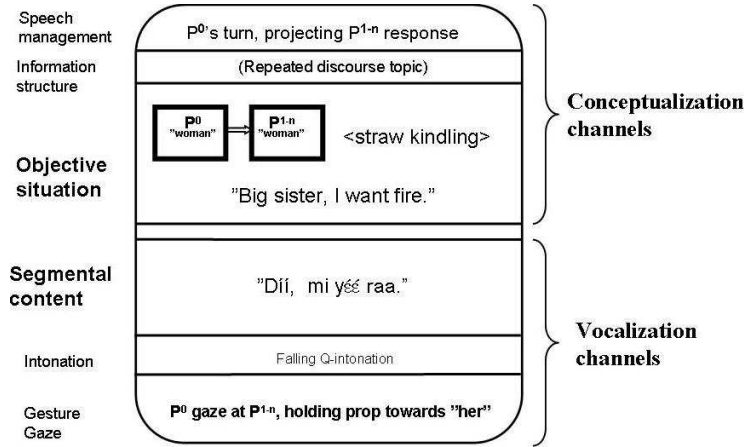


Figure 5.18: The question schema from the 'Asking for fire' game)

events of this phrase within the game is given in Fig. 5.18. It contains the Nizaa phrase in the Segmental content channel. The meaning of the phrase, together with the players' roles and the prop used, are given in the Objective situation channel. The asker is Player 0,  $P^0$ , and the answerers are all the other players, from Player 1 and up to however many participants there are in the circle,  $P^{1-n}$ . These roles are all specified by the game setting to be female. As a secondary speech genre the phrase has been written in quotation marks. Other parts of the total discourse space are not represented in Fig. 5.18, but these would also be secondary, the "Ground" having the two roles of asker and refuser, and the "Context" specifying that only women cook and take care of fires.

A similar question of asking for a boon is used in another of the games described in 5.3.4, the 'Pumpkin game', cited on p. 181. Putting these two game questions together, we can abstract a more general schema of asking for a boon, by looking at the typical "grounding" and "context", and the roles used in the game world.

In both games the asker addresses the future giver politely, using 'Grand-mother' or 'Big sister'. The address terms are kinship terms, but commonly used for addressing females whether they are related or not, as noted in 4.5.2 on page 120, especially *dii* 'big sister'. Still, the terms place the asker in an inferior position and the addressed person in a superior position. This is not a wholly undesirable position, however: a younger sibling or a grandchild have a right to

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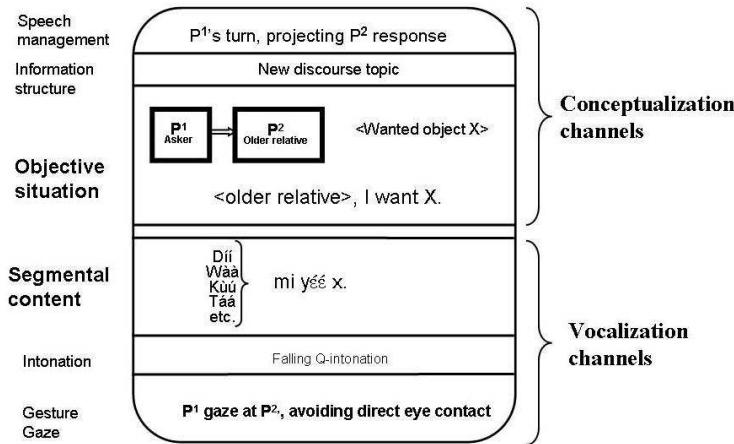


Figure 5.19: The speech genre for asking a favour.

ask for things needed or wanted (see 4.5.2, p. 122).<sup>13</sup> Then the asker states the wish— ‘I want a pumpkin, I want fire.’ In one of the games the asker is refused, in the other the wanted object is given. The gift has a price, however. In the ‘Pumpkin’ game the asker is given an explicit role as a *nii yòm* ‘lazy person’, this is exemplified by the words he or she is cited to have uttered when there was work to be done: “*When I dug my field, didn’t you say that the earth stank?*” Still the asker gets his/her pumpkin after all; the dislike of working in the fields is exposed, but does not lead to the asker starving.

In the game of asking for fire, however, the asker is accused of stealing food, and finally she does not get what she asks for. A woman sloppy enough to let her fire go out and who is untrustworthy on top of that, stands a small chance of getting what she asks for. In this respect, the game is vivid reminder of both the usefulness of planning ahead and seeing to that one’s path is clean vis-à-vis other people.

Abstracting now a more general schema from the usage events of these two games, and from ordinary requests for things, the result would be something like Fig. 5.19. As a general speech genre it is no longer specified for use in a game context, and so citation marks have been removed. P<sup>1</sup> and P<sup>2</sup> do not refer to players any longer, but rather to participants in a conversation. The P<sup>2</sup> participant is construed to be an older relative, or at least as a superior kindly disposed to

<sup>13</sup>The use of a superior kinship term such as ‘mother’ or ‘father’ as an introduction to ask for something is actually a common way of phrasing a request in Cameroon generally.

the asker, whether this is actually the case or not. The kinship term used can be those already mentioned, **díí** ‘big sister’ and **wàà** ‘grandmother’, but also terms like **kùú** ‘grandfather’, **táá** ‘father’, and others.

Alongside the instances of schemas for asking a boon in these two games, schematic models for both accepting and refusing it are given. The granting of a favour in the game of pumpkins comes with a snub of the asker. The snub is licensed by the asker placing him or herself in an inferior position by asking and by using terms of address construing the giver as superior; thus when you ask for something, it is with a risk.

The main variant of how to refuse in the game of asking for fire can very well also be described as a schematic speech genre. The refusal has the form “I’ve got X cooking on the fire, (no) lest you go steal from it.” The food stuff in the first clause can be chosen by the players themselves, together with a corresponding verb, but the clause follows otherwise a fairly fixed pattern, finishing with an adverbial phrase of **raa bírá** or **raaná**, meaning ‘on top of the fire’ or ‘on the fire.’ Then comes the ‘lest’-construction: **fààj wu ge yíí diwà**. ‘so that you don’t go to steal from it(=the food).’ The actual refusal in the form of a ‘no’ is not overtly present in the phrase, it is understood. The idea conveyed is that the asker cannot be allowed near the fire to kindle her bunch of straw, she will steal from the food cooking there.

From my own experience with Nizaa politeness and ways of relating to each other, I find it somewhat surprising that there is such a curt refusal involved in the game. Navigating the narrow straits of kinship obligations, neighbourhood relations and the keeping up of face, many Nizaa women would probably never refuse such a request, let alone in such insulting terms. The fact that the game does this so blatantly and cheekily, is perhaps some of the fun for the children. But is it really a model for how to refuse a request? Yes, when a joke is called for because the interacting parties are on good terms and have a more or less equal standing. No, when the relationship is already strained, and there is uncertainty to how superiority and inferiority should be handled. In other words, the refusal of fire in this game may be of limited value as a direct model for any refusal of a favour, but it points at least to the possibility of refusing. As for insulting behaviour, it is a very common mode among equals for relating to each others, and maybe the game practice is more useful for practicing friendly insults than refusals in earnest.

Practicing asking for favours and accepting or refusing them for certain reasons in games are a way of learning how to do this. In the case of refusals, the thing learnt may be more how to use refusals and insults to tease others. The group of children who played the recorded game can be considered a community of practice, engaging in the joint activity of having fun the way children is supposed to have fun in this sociocultural environment. By playing they also practice speech

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genres which they both hear used and may need themselves. Playing these games widens their perspective by practicing different ways of relating to other people.

#### Imitating models

In the particular game transcribed and commented upon in 5.3.5, Maayí intervenes directly in the game at two points and provides speech models for the children, taking a teaching role. It is again a form of teaching by demonstration, only here the demonstrated skill is a verbal game skill, while the skill taught in 5.2.2 was manual.

Maayí anchors her intervention in turn (9) by referring to what people normally do to play this game, that is, to the larger cultural community. She repeats this at least three times in her first intervention, keeping the children's attention as she fetches the necessary prop. Then she calls for Maja's attention, singling him out as the main game propagonist. She then models the right way of asking for fire in this game, with appropriate gestures and body configuration: she looks directly at Player 2 as she bows slightly forward, puts the straw under his nose and says: **"Díí mi yéé raa"** 'Sister, I want some fire.' The boy looks away and halfturns as it is impolite for him to look directly at a grown person, but he smiles. Maayí gives a short explanation of the game in turn (11), saying that it is to show them how to run about to get a fire, and getting close, to take it and leave. The sentence does not seem to be a direct model for answering, however.<sup>14</sup> She repeats the demonstration of the question to Player 3, ignoring Maja touching her hand to take over the prop. Both here and in Tobí's demonstration of a basketry skill (see p. 158), the learner makes a silent bid to take over prematurely, before the expert deems him or her ready. It is dealt with in the same way, by ignoring the bid, and in both cases this is immediately accepted. After a further demonstration Maayí straightens up, visible leaving the game role of asker. She gives Maja the prop and leaves the circle with a further comment which does not seem to be meant as a model for the children. Maja gets on with asking for fire, after the interlude of instructing the children to use Nizaa instead of Fulfulde.

What happens next is interesting. The children themselves use each others' speech models. The first Nizaa answer is **Raa fá**, 'There is no fire', turn (19), and Maayí seems to endorse this in turn (20), saying **Aee** from outside the circle. That answer is then repeated by the next four players.<sup>15</sup> Instead of coming up with novel variations of cheeky answers, they just stick to the acceptable model given by player 2.

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<sup>14</sup>Unfortunately, the translation here is uncertain, it is possible that a Fulfulde word is used.

<sup>15</sup>The situation is parallel to the earlier repetition of a Fulfulde answer, see comment in turn (4) of the full transcript, App. A.1 on p. 358.

Maayí has stopped just outside the circle to watch, and in turn (26) she intervenes again, this time modeling a better answer, without further comments. Manga is the player most visibly listening to her, but the others pay attention as well, and in the next sequence, player 6 takes up and uses the model. Importantly, when repeating the model given by Maayí, the player uses only the last part, skipping the mention of some kind of food cooking. And in fact, in the game context, it is this clause which is the most relevant, it is what gets the interaction going forward, while the first part is more of an embellishment. The choice shows that Player 6 has a clear understanding of what she is doing within the game world.

Then comes a new succession of repetitions, broken only by Linda who goes back to the first model, more appropriate to her level of competence. Possibly some of the last five players have different answers as well, but it is difficult to hear their answers properly. The repeated use of almost the same form shows how readily the children use each other as models, imitating what was acceptable for the earlier speaker. The game as played here is an striking example of the force of *peer imitation* in a Nizaa learning context.

## 5.4 Riddle games and tales

In the preceding sections we have looked at guided participation and intent observation to learn both basic and more specific skills in 5.2, and at Nizaa children's peer culture in the form of scripted games in 5.3. I have identified speech genres used in these situations, both for demonstrating skills to learners and the more complex use in games.

The present section deals with yet another aspect of learning in the Nizaa cultural community, the use of riddles and tales to inculcate knowledge and values in children.

In the most basic way, teaching and learning verbal skills are not necessarily different from teaching and learning practical skills, though different in content. Both situations can call for the use of learners' guided participation and their intent observation of experts. These processes and modes of learning are not tied to the nature of the material to be learned, but are more general ways of treating interaction for learning.

In other ways the learning from riddles and tales differs in two ways from the previous material. It is different from teaching practical skills by the place of language use within it: in tales and riddles the use of language is the object learned rather than a means for learning something else. It is also different from games by being used in adult-child interaction rather than only child-child interaction.

Both riddles and tales are recognised as specific kinds of speech among the Nizaa, with their own labels. The riddles go by the name used for the

## 5.4. RIDDLE GAMES AND TALES

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introduction **kěreg`-cǎgri`**, and tales are called **gèèŋ**, probably derived from the verb **gɛɛŋcírɛ̀**, ‘speak, talk.’ Games as those reviewed in the previous section go by the name of **jém** ‘play’, and playing is called **jéécí jém** ‘play plays, games.’ The words are used of many types of play, jumping a baby on one’s lap, playing with objects, the school processions on the festival days, in addition to the social games, all fall under the label of play. A further traditional genre is **nimùù** ‘proverbs.’

A full treatment of these traditional genres, with transcribed examples of their actual use, is impossible given the limited space of the present work. I will therefore treat just some examples of riddles in 5.4.1, and paraphrase one tale of caution in 5.4.3 on page 206.

### 5.4.1 The riddle game

Riddling has a central place in the traditional lore actively transmitted to new generations by adults. However, there is no reason to think that teaching the children is the only reason why parents or other adults involve themselves in riddle games and storytelling. It is also a socially acceptable and, I think, a personally rewarding way for adults to interact with youngsters.

The data for the presentation below come from several sources. An important source is a collection of riddles, tales and stories in Nizaa published by the Nizaa language project. The book is called “*Kěreg`, cǎgri` wú Nízuàwu gèèŋ; ‘Devinettes et histoire des Nizaa’*” (Littérature Nizaa 1997), and was produced to serve as a Nizaa easy reader. The riddles in the book were mostly provided by my later research assistant Patouma Sambo Jacqueline together with Doudou Marie, who both worked as secretaries in the Nizaa language project. In addition to this book, I recorded Patouma asking riddles in three classes at the Nizaa primary school in Galim in 2005, as mentioned in 5.3.1 on page 168. Finally I observed one occasion of spontaneous riddling in Mipom, when I overheard Maayí and her children going through the most common set of riddles one night in Mipom. That incident deserves some attention:

*23rd February 2008*

It was an overcast night and quite dark in the compound. The children were not gathered in any common activity, but were rather loitering around the courtyard more or less occupied with different things. While Maayí did various small tasks, she posed the riddles and got the answers from the children, as if this was a well-known and not very exciting routine thing. The set of riddles used by Maayí on that occasion seems to be the most common set, what is always cited first as examples of riddles.

It has been claimed that in some cultural contexts the children are not at all used to getting so-called known-answer questions, where the asker knows the answer already (Heath 1983, Rogoff et al. 2003). Heath (see 2.1.1 on page 15) showed that known-answer questions was a rare pattern in the Afro-American community which formed part of Heath's study. In school it was, however, the most prevalent pattern; there it was used either to check for uptake of material, or to let children display knowledge. It was a common pattern in American middle-class 'towns people' interaction with children as well, functioning as a preparation for school. Indeed, it seems that such questions are not much used in ordinary straight-forward Nizaa adult-child interaction, where children if asked about something get real requests for information that the asker does not know.

Now riddling as used among the Nizaa seems to some extent to be about coming up with the well-known answers to questions heard before, and the asker certainly knows the answer. In the riddle context, at least, known-answer questions are part of the interactional routine. In the case of the most common riddles, then, many children over a certain age may know the answer, while other, less common, riddles require serious thinking to come up with a response.

The fact that some riddles are quite difficult is part of the attraction of the riddle game, it makes for a true challenge and competition theme in the game. The challenge-response aspect of riddles is a common one in African riddling games (Bonvini 1988, 248), and it is institutionalised in the form of the riddling session itself. Normally a riddling session starts with the riddler asking the other participants **Këreg`**! which is a kind of challenge: 'Guess!' They will respond **Căgrì**! 'Riddle!' meaning that the challenge is taken up.<sup>16</sup> Another possible translation of **Căgrì**! would be 'I'll guess', except that it is not a verb phrase. The introduction can be repeated for each new riddle, or at changes of the riddler.

The challenging and the competitive nature of a riddling session are well-known features also to other ethnic groups in Cameroon as well. I had the opportunity to see just how animated and fun such sessions can be when I took part in a book production course for literature workers in the different language projects of the Lutheran Church (1997 or 1998). We spent a very lively evening doing riddle games and telling stories, each language group having its own version of the 'Guess! Riddle!' opening.

Formally, riddles are not questions in Nizaa, but declarative sentences. They have no interrogative particles, as can be seen in the examples given in the next section. Still they come in pairs of riddle and response.<sup>17</sup> The introduction of

<sup>16</sup>Littérature Nizaa (1997) puts **Këreg`** as a title on the riddle sets in the book, and **Căgrì** as title on the answer sets. Patouma explained these two words in French as 'Devines!' and 'Devinette!' the meaning being roughly as explained.

<sup>17</sup>In the reader, the riddles were written with a question mark, in a striking blend of the European and Nizaa riddle genre.



5.4. RIDDLE GAMES AND TALES

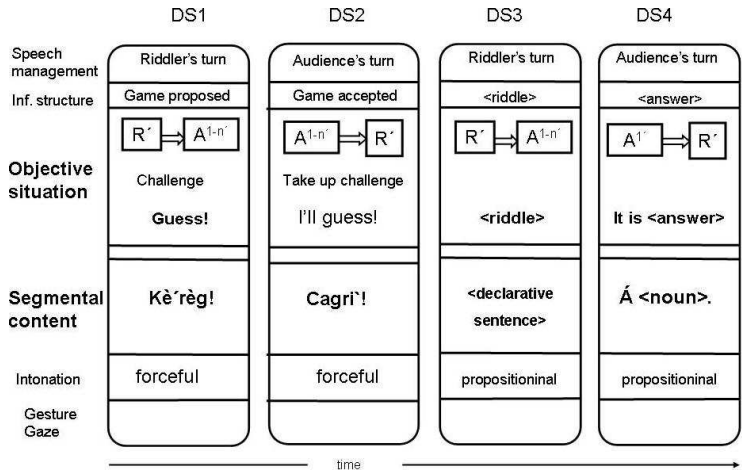


Figure 5.20: Riddle game speech genre schema

‘Guess! Riddle!’ sets the following riddles apart from other similar declarative sentences and marks it as being the first part of an adjacency pair. Fig. 5.20 shows the unfolding of a riddle game from challenge to first riddle answered, as a succession of the viewing frames of four discourse spaces. The audience (or riddlees) can be one person or several, and the roles can change as one riddler exhausts his or her store of riddles and another takes over.

The riddle game contains a set of speech genres with certain formal characteristics. It has a fixed opening formula where both riddler and riddlees participate in a repartee structure. The riddles themselves are declarative and self-contained in form, with no connections to referents in the immediate situation surrounding the participants: riddles make their own context. Usually the name of an object is the required answer to the riddle. The answer can be found by analogy of form or function, and, in the case of well-known riddle sets, by remembering the right answer.

The speech genre schemas are open-ended enough for respondents to come up with new answers within the given constraints, and probably to create new riddles based on the existing schemas. The use of the formal introduction tells the participants that a riddle is forthcoming, not a question or some piece of information. The challenged person can start to look for possible responses within the style of riddling right away, looking for analogies and hidden meanings.

### 5.4.2 Counting riddles and analogies

The set of riddles given below is the most common set, said to be taught first to all Nizaa children. The riddle frame sentence in the first set of examples is kept the same throughout the set, it is only the countword at the end that changes. The first riddle says: 'I picked my *ḡòò* (kind of fruit) on the other side of the forest, one,' the next riddle repeats this phrase, but ends with 'two,' and so on up to seven. The response to the riddle, then, are things which come only in the number mentioned by the riddle. For the second riddle the answer may thus be things which always occurs in pairs, such as ears, breasts or eyes. The riddles are cited below with a proposed response.

- 1) **Mi kibwu mí ḡòò yaá korá` mum.**  
 –*Cún njee*: The 'pot tree', the raphia stick used to turn the couscous, there is only one in the kitchen.
- 2) **Mi kibwu mí ḡòò yaá korá` ḡaara.**  
 –*Yír`*: Eyes
- 3) **Mi kibwu mí ḡòò yaá korá` taara.**  
 –*Kipeè.*: The three stones of the cooking fire, to stand the cooking pot on.
- 4) **Mi kibwu mí ḡòò yaá korá` naàna.**  
 –*ḡgweɛɛ gbámmi*: The four straps of a pannier.
- 5) **Mi kibwu mí ḡòò yaá korá` téɛɛna.**  
 –*Cam`*: The five fingers of the hand.
- 6) **Mi kibwu mí ḡòò yaá korá` tán mum.**  
 –*Cam` læri*: A sixth finger (considered common enough among the Nizaa to have acquired its own term).
- 7) **Mi kibwu mí ḡòò yaá korá` tán ḡaara.**  
 –*Koroɲ` sum*: The seven strings of the traditional 'guitar' (string instrument with a bowed neck and a small body made of cured hide stretched over a wooden frame).

A riddle game such as this clearly can induce a child to learn counting by observing and counting common things in her environment. Other riddles point out other facets of the world and there are riddles which are much more challenging and tricky than this set used by Maayí and her children.

#### 5.4. RIDDLE GAMES AND TALES

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A further riddle set taken from the collection of riddles and other texts (Littérature Nizaa 1997) shows another characteristic theme of African riddles: they point out analogies.

1) **Kpuɔ suŋ` ɓóŋ nùùŋ.**

“Kpuɔ drinks by the riverside.”

—Name of fruits growing by the river.

2) **Njan gìw ɗàà á ké gúúŋná gúúŋná njéw-ŋa.**

“There is an old lady who always bends without getting enough.”

—The handle of the hoe; the bunch of wild banana; an ordinary banana etc.

3) **Gidèé ɗàà á ké tutòŋw` yááná gbóó-ŋa, ŋu yéŋwtáŋ` taŋ sun nú-ŋwa.**

“There is a young man who works tirelessly, he has not yet tasted food.”

—The machete

4) **Mi kwayw mí ɗóòŋ, mi mgbeé gbiíŋ ɗààná mi cɛɛkiré-, mi ndóŋkí lèè lò, mi kwayw jəŋakiré-.**

“I get on my horse, I come to another village, I get down, after having passed thus, I get on again.”

—The shoes.

The first riddle uses an analogy of doing, as both “Kpuɔ” (name of a tree?) and fruit trees growing by the river drink its water. The second is an analogy of shape, the answer should point out something curved like an old stooping woman. The third takes up the relation between spending and working, and points out that the machete works without demanding refueling. The fourth riddle is about shoes, seen as ‘riders’ on the feet of the wearer.

Such analogies certainly gives a fresh look at the world, with their leaps of imagination. To solve the riddle, the riddlee must actively search for the intended analogy, for example by picturing a stooping old woman in his mind and think of what can have the same bent shape and which stays that way. Riddle solving is a constant training in seeing things in the environment in new and unexpected ways, and combine otherwise unrelated facts. As such it is an efficacious training in cognitive skills.

### 5.4.3 Tales

Nizaa tales range over a large scale, from quite short ones with two or three protagonists, to elaborate stories with a number of characters and many episodes and subplots. They may be funny, as the example given below, or tragic, or sinister, with supernatural forces playing a role. Many of the funny ones are animal tales, with a stable set of animals as main characters: The tricky Hare, the greedy Hyena, the forceful, but stupid Lion, the easily offended Spider and so on. They each have their typical traits in the tales, but sometimes their roles are turned on the head, as when the usually stupid Cock ends up triumphing over the Hare, outwitting him. The animal characters are ‘under-cover humans’, but they also retain typical animal traits: the Monkey climbs trees, the Hare jumps; the Spider weaves webs so well that he makes a ladder up to heaven for the animals of the bush when they decide to visit their in-laws up in the sky ...

As texts, the tales come with a title, usually naming the main characters, such as ‘The two sisters’, ‘The old woman and the monkeys’, ‘The archer’, and ‘Uncle Hare and the Cock’. After a few sentences giving the necessary orientation and setting the scene, the story starts, reaches some climactic event, and then winds quickly down, often with a little song, before the formal ending **Gèèṅ tóró tóro`**, **gééṅ mbuàṅnà, mi gínna**. “The tale is over, the tale should diminish, I should grow.”

As already mentioned, Patouma had three sessions of storytelling at the Group 2 school in Galim. These sessions came about as parts of the National Culture-subject found in the curriculum, and two of the teachers had quite lengthy sessions of storytelling or riddles themselves before giving the floor to Patouma. She started each session with a sequence of the counting riddles introduced by **Kèreg`!** and had little trouble getting responses, something that showed that the riddles of 5.4.2 on page 204 really are well-known to many Nizaa children.

The sessions themselves were interesting blends of traditional and school ways of speaking. Patouma herself commented on this after the first session, in the third grade. According to her, tales are normally just told, without interruptions, comments or questions, be it from of the teller or the audience. She, however, posed a number of questions to the class, ‘since we were at school’. Questioning is indeed a very prevalent feature of school talk, see 7.2.2 on page 249.

She chose three different tales for the three classes we visited. In the fifth and sixth grade class, she told a tale of a grandmother using tricks to catch a flock of monkeys destroying her fields. The grandmother exploits the curiosity of the animals to capture and kill the monkey mother, finally roasting her over the fire, while the monkey children sadly watch from the treetops. In the third grade class she told a tale about a lazy big sister and an industrious little sister, and in the first and second grade class she told an animal fable about Uncle Hare and the Cock.

#### 5.4. RIDDLE GAMES AND TALES

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All the tales were deliberately chosen for their usefulness for learners at different stages of maturity.

##### **The danger of imitation**

I shall here give a closer account of the session of the first & second grade class, choosing it for two reasons. In the first place, that class was my focus class at the school, presenting in many ways the most graphic picture of the experience of going to school with a little-known language as medium of instruction. In the second place, the tale in itself gives an interesting glimpse into how the Nizaa conceptualise learning and teaching in this age group of about seven to eight years.

We shall start with a paraphrase of the tale as told by Patouma at this occasion, only leaving out the direct interaction with the students for comprehension checks.

##### **The Hare and the Cock**

“The Cock and the Hare got on very well with each other, they were great friends. Friends visit each other frequently, as you know. One day, then, the Hare stood up, saying ‘I go to my friend, I go to see him.’ He walked and he walked, and found the Cock standing in the courtyard.

A cock standing in the courtyard, how does he do sometimes? He does like this: he puts his head back under his wing, like this.

Hum! The Hare found the Cock with his head under his wing like that—there was no head. The Hare was astonished: “Ah! Ah! Wife of the Cock, where then is the head of your husband?” The Cock’s wife said “Hm, my husband that you see there? His head has gone off, he cut clean off his head and the head has gone to greet my fathers and my mothers<sup>18</sup> way off in an other village.”

The Cock’s wife lied. The Cock’s wife lied seriously, the cock’s wife lied, lied to Uncle Hare, saying that her husband had cut clean off his head and that the head had gone off to greet her family, it was only the body that remained.

What did Uncle Hare do? Runn-nning! Uncle Hare got up and ran all the way to Hare’s compound- from the Cock’s compound to his own compound, pítíp, pítíp, pítíp, pítíp, pítíp, pítíp. Hare coming back like

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<sup>18</sup>The plural is used on the last word of the phrase in Nizaa both here (‘father and mothers’) and later in the tale (‘mother and fathers’) and refers to paternal uncles and maternal aunts along the biological parents.

that said “My wife, my wife, my wife, but me here, I am a loony, all and every day it is me that go to see your mothers and fathers, but as for my friend the Cock, he cuts off his head, it is the head only that goes, his body remains!”

Hare picked up the machete, and running he carried it over to his wife and put it in her hands, saying “Take this machete!” He put his head down on top of a tree trunk, saying “Cut right off my neck, quick, quick!” His wife said “And I will cut . . .”, he said “Cut, cut, cut!” His wife took the machete, put it over his head and, hnh! She cut it right off, NDING!

How did Uncle Hare behave? The neck was cut right off, the body started to twitch and jump, tik, tik, tik, tik, tik, tik, tik; nat, nat, nat nat; sileence. He was dead. As for the Cock, he stayed on.

The tale is finished, the tale should diminish, I should grow.”

When I first heard this tale, many years ago, I laughed, but I could not quite understand what it was about. There must be some moral being put forward, but what was it? Was it the importance of visiting in-laws, with justice cracking down on Hare for trying to shirk this duty? Was it the danger of lying to a friend, inadvertently killing him? The danger of deceitful wives? The answer turned out to be much simpler: the tale is about the danger of heedlessly imitating one’s friend, without thinking about consequences. Hare is so impressed with the idea of letting the head only go to visit relatives and leaving the body behind to rest, that he goes straight home and tries it, with disastrous consequences. The danger of imitating others without thinking is the real theme of the story.

Imitation is an extremely common learner’s practice, all over the world. It is easy to find examples in my data: Asta at 18 months seriously working away at washing her briefs beside her mother doing the laundry in the river. The imitation of speech models noted in 5.3.6 on page 199. The 12-year-old boy in Mipom who first closely watched my note-taking in class and started making long, scribbly lines in his own notebook, nonsense-letters only. All the times when some child did something and was followed by several others . . . . Imitation of others, preferably experts, is a common and expected behaviour for Nizaa children. It is clearly an acceptable behaviour when used for learning useful things.

As noted in 5.3.6 on page 199, imitation is a very common behaviour in Nizaa peer groups. It was in fact nicely illustrated at the beginning of the story session with Patouma, as she asked who was Nizaa in class and understood the language. A number of voices answered **Á mí**; **Á mí**; **Mí**, ‘I am; I am; Me’ spread out over the class. Then a little voice piped up and said **Á mí fá!** ‘I am not!’ and this was likewise followed by an uneven chorus of the same phrase, asserting in

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Nizaa that they did not understand that language! Did the last respondents know what they were responding to, or did they just follow what somebody else had said loud and clear?

The Nizaa are aware of imitation as a possible dangerous course to take. A child is not always able to pick good models, and sometimes the models deliberately lead their hangers-on astray. It is seen as a more serious problem for younger children, with less ability to discern, and a higher likelihood of simply following somebody's lead. Thinking before acting is very important, or you may end up dead. Hence such stories as 'Uncle Hare and the Cock'.

Importantly, all such tales meant to instruct do so implicitly. The message is not put forward in some clear sentential form, the listeners have to figure it out for themselves. The formal ending of a tale, **Gèèṅ tóró tóro`**, **géeṅ mbuàṅnà**, **mi gínna**, is in fact an admonition about this: now the tale is told, and now the tale should diminish, as it is comprehended, and I should grow bigger, by comprehending it.

##### **Asking what the tale means**

Tales are normally told without interruptions and comments from the audience, and without questions from the teller to the audience after the tale is finished. The deeper meanings are simply not talked about, they are supposed to enter the listener as he or she reflects on repeated tellings of the tale. Not knowing this, I have tried many times during the years to ask directly about what some tale means, but I have mostly got only evasive answers and shrugging, preferably even not letting on that anything was evaded. The virtue of the tale's meaning seems to be partly that the listener has to figure it out for herself.

In this light, Patouma's attempt to elicit the meaning of the tale from the class after the telling is quite remarkable. The interaction partly paraphrased and partly cited below is interesting as a hybrid form between the village ways of telling tales and typical school interaction with known-answer questions from a teacher. Patouma was, as noted above, quite aware of this, but still chose to do it.

The situation of tale telling here had a large difference as compared to the ordinary village setting. In the village, the tales are told again and again and the children have a chance to get to know them well and to reflect on them. In the context of the family group, the adults telling the tales may quietly monitor the children in their charge to see if the message has penetrated. When Patouma visited the classes in Galim, on the other hand, she knew that this was the only occasion for her to tell a tale here, and she would know nothing about the input of tales the children might have from other sources. That, and the school setting itself, probably overrode the usual reticence about making clear the meaning of the tale. She found the subject of imitation important for these children: heedless

imitation can be dangerous at any time, and it is always a problem at school, because it is one of the things the teachers constantly crack down on. There is a severe ban against imitating other students in school because it is seen as cheating. Not to imitate anyone but the teacher is a basic prohibition at school, running through all student activity as rules against cheating. The theme was thus an appropriate one for telling at school. Apparently Patouma also found it appropriate to make the message all clear in this case.

## **5.5 Games, riddles and tales as learning environments**

Games, tales and riddles are part of the “activities or routines ... that children produce and share.” (Corsaro 1997, 95) By their connection to the larger cultural context, games are good places for picking up different kinds of knowledge and skills in the socio-cultural environment of the children. The knowledge may be concrete items such as names of fruits or animals and animal characteristics, or it may be that motor skills such as elaborate jumping or pivoting exercises can be acquired.

As for tales and riddles, the connection to the larger cultural context is just as clearly an important teaching feature. Tales will give an attentive child ideas about underlying meanings, while they are enjoyable as stories in themselves. Riddling develops solving problems, or at least remembering the right answers with an understanding of why they are right.

Furthermore, the games, riddles and tales contain instances of speech genres which the children need to know. The often lively dialogues portrayed in tales will show language use in different settings and situations. In games, the children themselves produce the gamelines, practicing both primary and secondary speech genres. Participating in these childhood activities translates into participating in a rich learning environment. The most important effect, however, is not the various bits and pieces of local knowledge, but the acquiring of a frame of reference shared by adults and children alike.

### **5.5.1 Reproducing the frame of reference**

Social games are forms of play usually having a verbal script coupled with a set of actions, constructing a play world. Tales have less nonverbal actions tied to them, and are more removed from direct interaction, they are language use performed to an audience. Riddles twist the eye to look at the world in other ways by using unexpected metaphors and similes. All take up important cultural themes and



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practices from the culture in which they exist, as the foregoing sections have shown. Though often somewhat frowned upon as ‘only tales’ and ‘only children’s games’ in our own cultural context, they are in fact important cultural expressions, serving to construct a coherent view of the world for the children playing the games and listening to the tales. Klapproth (2004) shows in her analysis of the role of narrative discourse, in Australian Aboriginal and in Anglo-Western culture respectively, how a symbolic universe or a common frame of reference is created and taught to new generations by narratives and tales. In my view, the same process occurs in playing games. Doing riddles and listening to tales, together with playing games, are very important ways for children of getting a sense of how the world works in their socio-cultural environment.

Children’s games and tales are as expressions of culture a way of reifying culturally important ideas and practices. They are not necessarily ‘pedagogical’, however, in the sense of moralistically showing the right vs. the wrong way to think or act, but rather bring cultural themes into play. ‘Into play’ means both making them more salient for the participants and onlookers, but also quite literally that the children play this way. Games are activities that children all over the world engage in because they enjoy doing it, rather than considering the pedagogical value.

Social games create a play world with its own roles and regulations as compared to the everyday reality, though the differences of course may be quite small. In the play world, children can enter roles and play out situations of conflict or competition in a safe setting. Tales do the same thing, only with less use of roleplay from several participants, instead the audience assist vicariously in the action put on display by the tale teller. In comparable ways, tales and games of different kinds rehearse common roles and situations in the cultural community, tying into the common frame of references of the group in question. From another point of view they can be said to produce the frame of reference by reenacting the themes brought up by the games.

### 5.5.2 Games and tales as usage events of speech genres

In Chapter 2 I discussed genres not only as the traditional classificatory system applied to different texts, but as linguistic items in themselves, that is as schematic conventional symbolic structures, consisting of phonological form and semantic content. I labeled typical forms found in all kinds of everyday interaction *speech genres* and argued that speech genres are schematic frameworks which people use to shape their interaction. The abstract schemas are immanent in actual linguistic interaction and can be both orientational frameworks when used successfully and disorganising principles when interaction fails to fulfill the expectations created by the use of a certain form, see ( 2.5.2 on page 44). When a speech genre is

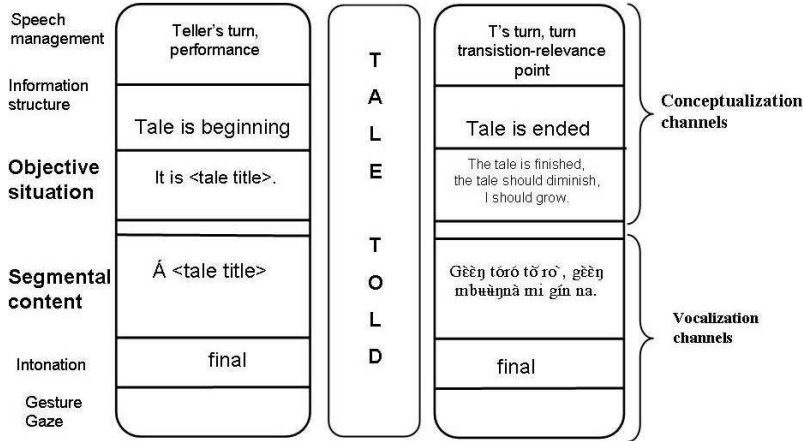


Figure 5.21: The speech genre of starting and ending a tale

actually used in interaction, the usage event will contain more detail and more linguistic material than specified in the schema: the schema of a speech genre typically underdetermines the texts cast in it. When looking at games and tales, I thus looked for recurrent commonalities in language use, which could be expected to form speech genres. There are indeed some interactional patterns common to several games, such as a sung solo-refrain structure, with the solo weaving variations on some theme and the other players answering with an invariant chorus line each time. Other games would have a fixed sequence of lines repeated for each player, often with a variation of naming or designating the next player to participate, in other words an interactional routine. The riddle game has a formal introduction which orient the participants to what kind of interaction will come next.

Titles of tales have a similar function, and tales are formally closed with a fixed phrase, telling participants that other kinds of talk may resume. This is the most important conceptualisations of their use, more than the actual meaning of the ending formula, for instance.

However, there are obviously many speech genres embedded in the texts of tales and games. I presented some examples in the Asking for fire game, both the primary speech genres for asking a favour and accepting or refusing a request, and the secondary speech genres, the game-lines themselves. Similar things are present in the tales, which as fictive texts are removed from the actual interaction between the participants in a tale telling performance.

The interactional routines used in games and around riddles and tales are a kind of double-status speech genres. On the one hand, they belong in very specific contexts and cannot necessarily be used in ordinary situations. On the other hand they draw their eligibility to salient use in a game situation from the ordinary use settings, with its complete socio-cultural context.

As we saw in Chapter 2.5.3 on page 45, texts in different genres have a different impact on the context structure, from directly entering interaction, to being more removed from it as something performed by designed performers and watched by an audience. In the folklore genre analysis presented there, (see Fig. 2.3 on page 48) the play genres form a particular segment on the scale of genres from the strongly interactive conversational genres to the less personally involved fictional genres. When considered from the perspective of the structure of the context, games are usage events<sup>19</sup> for a set of speech genres somewhat removed from the close interpersonal action of the conversational genres. There is an element of role-playing in front of an audience, though in the most common situation of playing games, the participants and the audience overlap, to a large extent.

A closer look at the games presented earlier show that some are close to the conversational genres and draw upon more direct interaction between the players. Game 5, Choosing one's spouse, may serve as an example: though having prescribed lines, these are not so much roles in an acted-out story as direct comments on failure or success in the game situation which then point to failure or success in the later real-life situation of married life. Other games have the participants enact small dramatised stories with clear roles and prescribed lines to be acted out by the players, like the game of asking for fire. In these cases the players truly construct a play world.

Tales go even further toward the fictional, removed part of the scale. From the point of view of a Bakhtinian genre analysis, these games and tales thus contain examples of secondary speech genres, texts taken out of their immediate primary use and employed to construct a fictive world, see 2.2.2 on page 26. However, they are also a part of the game interaction going on here and now among the participants in the game.

Some of the importance of telling tales, asking riddles and playing games, then, comes from their use of speech genres in a secondary setting, with some use context highlighted and evaluated from the perspective of cultural themes important in the group of players. The speech genres involved are learned at two levels, one is the level of the game and its role play, the other is the unmarked use of the same schemas in ordinary situations. The two levels are likely to influence each other. The secondary use in roleplay will normally pick up changes in the

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<sup>19</sup>See 2.3.2 on page 31.

primary usage, leaving behind archaic forms and outdated ways of speaking. The primary usage will have more resonance in its daily use, connotations from the secondary use situation entering into and enriching its conceptualisation.

## Chapter 6

### The school system in Cameroon

In Chapter 7 and 8 we shall enter schools and classrooms in the target area and look in minute detail at the interaction taking place there. Before doing so, however, the present chapter will take a useful bird's eye view on the larger context of schooling in Cameroon.

First I will look at school history from the 1800's onwards in 6.1, as this shows some of the background for the present-day characteristics of education in Cameroon. Some information of the educational system of today is also needed, this is given in 6.2. Finally, I will anchor the later observations in more tangible facts about school facilities of the Galim-Tignère *arrondissement*, this is done in 6.3. The very last section of the chapter shortly discuss the impact of schooling on the structure of childhood, in 6.4.

#### 6.1 Historical outline of schooling in Cameroon

The form of education given in Cameroonian public schools is of the kind often dubbed 'formal schooling,' as opposed to 'informal' or 'traditional' ways of transferring knowledge. In its common use this simply implies Western-style schooling. Another term frequently used by Francophone authors is : 'école moderne,' or 'modern schooling' (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994). As in many ways Koranic schools also fall under the label of 'formal schooling,' though they are quite different from most Western models, I will use the term 'modern schooling' about the Western-style schooling of Cameroonian public schools. I will give a brief overview of the Koranic school system below, after a review of the Cameroonian public school system.

When looking at 'modern schooling' in Cameroon, then, we would also do well not to naïvely assume some standard Western model of schooling as our point of departure. As much as any other community, Cameroon has developed

its school system through a long historical process and with input from different agents, though its strongest influence undoubtedly came from European, and especially the French educational system.

### **6.1.1 Schooling under the German protectorate**

The very first schools in what is today Cameroon, were established by English Baptist missionaries in southern Cameroon and go back to 1844-45. Later other missionary societies established schools. For the rest of the century, education was mainly the domain of various religious organisations, notably the Protestant Basel Mission and the Catholic Pallottine Fathers (Atangana 1996, 40, 45). The Germans started to take control over southern Cameroon from 1884, but as we have seen in 4.2.2, the Adamaoua province did not come under European control till around 1900. Neither was education of the natives a priority of the Germans in their first 25 years of colonial activity in Cameroon. The first governmental school was created in Douala in 1888, but the first primary school in the northern provinces was established only in 1905, in Garoua. Furthermore, the administration did not encourage missionary work in the North, to diminish the danger of tensions between Moslems and Christians (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 99-100). This meant that no schools were started by missionary organisations.

Only in 1910 did the German administration take up public schooling as an obligation of colonial rule. However, rather than seriously developing a public school system, they preferred to rely on the already substantial work done by missionary organisations. Nevertheless they wanted to control education in the confessional schools already in existence. They achieved this by coupling governmental subsidies to the schools with demands of a minimum school program and length of education (Atangana 1996, 45-58). Primary school was to last for 5 years, and had certain language and curricular requirements. Already in 1903 the colonial administration had demanded that German should be the medium of instruction in all schools, but many confessional schools could not possibly meet this demand, they did not have enough teachers with the necessary level of German (Atangana 1996, 46). With the reorganisation of 1910, the requirement was changed to the teaching of German as a school subject the first two years and using it as medium of instruction the last three years. Both confessional and public schools were required to teach the German language and history, along with mathematics, natural science and geography, while confessional schools also had religious instruction on their schedule. In 1912, four governmental schools had 868 students, while various missionary societies had all in all 41 500 students in 225 schools (Atangana 1996, 50).

The goal of the colonial administration for developing education was to

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achieve a better economic exploitation of their colony, by preparing Cameroonians for lower-level work in the administration, trade or agriculture. In contrast to this, the various religious societies engaged in the education of Cameroonians had two other important priorities. On one hand, they wanted to evangelise students. On the other hand, their aim was to produce workers for their missionary activities. To achieve these ends knowing indigenous languages were necessary, while learning German could only tempt the future workers for the church to find work with the administration instead. Especially the Protestant societies such as the Basel Mission had used indigenous language in their schools, seeing them as indispensable instruments for their missionary work (Atangana 1996, 57). On the other hand, Catholic missions such as the Pallottine fathers had in place five years of education instead of four, and had a programme of teaching German in their schools already before 1910.

The German rule was ended in 1916, before any substantial educational apparatus on their part had been developed. Still it is interesting to note that they so heavily imposed the teaching of German, not only in the public schools, but also in the private schools. It was in fact also the most popular aspect of schooling in the eyes of the students, more so than the religious instruction so often offered besides it. A good knowledge of German could land Cameroonians a well paid job in the administration or be useful in trade occupations (Atangana 1996, 61).

### 6.1.2 French colonial schooling policy

The French and the British took over Cameroon in 1916 after 1 1/2 years of warfare. In 1922 the former German protectorate was divided in a French and a British mandatory area. This put Adamaoua and the other Northern provinces largely under French rule. As so little had been done by the Germans to develop schooling in these parts, it fell almost exclusively to the French colonial administration to provide schooling for the population in the North (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 100). The first schools were regional schools (Garoua had been taken over from the Germans, Maroua was established from 1918). They were not created with a view to educate the masses, only to educate the small number of indigenous workers necessary for the needs of the administration. This main policy prevailed till 1944, when the conference of the coming Union Française in Brazzaville redefined the goals of public instruction in the mandate areas (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 100).

The French took over some of the educational policy of the Germans, notably the system of subsidies. Subsidies could be used as a means to control private confessional schools, while leaving most of the educational work to them. The main subject matters were of course changed from German language, history and culture to the French equivalents, but the French colonial administration kept

the general structure of history, geography and some mathematics from the old programme. Importantly, they enforced the use of French as the only medium of instruction at all levels, except strictly religious instruction (Atangana 1996, 115).

Two other characteristics of the educational system are pointed out by Kelly (1984) in a comparison of educational systems and textbooks in French West Africa and French Indochina. The French educational policies of the two areas were vastly different.

First there were enormous differences in the range of education offered and the way of gaining access to it. Where Indochina had the full gamut of elementary through university education from 1918 onwards, the French West African educational system was preeminently a system of *primary* education. There were basically two levels of education, elementary and primary (roughly equivalent to today's Cours Elementaire and Cours Moyen). Some primary-superior schooling, mostly vocational<sup>1</sup> was possible, but there were hardly any institutions dispensing secondary education and leading to preparation for university studies.

In Indochina the students had to pass exams to gain access to further education. Admission to each later level of education could not be attained without passing competitive examinations, from the elementary level and upwards. In West Africa there were no degree requirements for entry into the primary grades, students were rather admitted upon sponsorship by political authorities and the village schoolmaster. Neither was scholastic achievement the only criterion for admission to further educational opportunities: it was official policy to give priority to sons of chiefs and notables in recruitment. The examinations and official certificates so important in Indochina and also in metropolitan France, had a much reduced impact here (Kelly 1984, 523–526).

Secondly, the textbooks in the two areas show some striking differences. Both had textbooks especially adapted to their environments, so this was not a question of directly transferring metropolitan French books, as France has sometimes been accused of doing (Kelly 1984, 523). In Indochina (first and foremost Vietnam), where the French dealt with the former independent state of Vietnam which had had a well-developed school system, French textbooks were heavily negative to precolonial schooling and institutions. In West Africa the tone was less derogative, but the curriculum depicted 'blacks' as an anonymous mass, not as nations or ethnic groups. Though many aspects of African society was talked about, it was done with heavy paternalism. The authors of schoolbooks had no qualms about fabricating 'African tales' presenting the French colonial rule as inevitable and benign. There was little comparison between Africans and French life, and even fewer, if any, descriptions of European realities, both negative and positive (Kelly 1984). Both sets of textbooks respond in a calculated way to the indigenous

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<sup>1</sup> Metalurgy, carpentry and others, along with teacher's college, aide-nurse schools etc.



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societies and cultures they were to be used in, avoiding mention of all things that could lead to notions of independence in the intended users of the books (Kelly 1984, 542).

The main target of French educational effort in its colonies, Cameroon included, was to create a limited number of indigenous auxiliaries who could serve as loyal, but low-ranked aids in the colonial administration in their efforts of 'mise en valeur' of the territories. A further goal was the diffusion of the French language and a practical education adapted to the African milieu, so that both rural productivity and a need for new consumer goods would increase (Sabatier 1978, 247). Education of the masses for their own good was not a goal, something which can be seen in the fact that there were only nine institutions of secondary education in the whole of French West Africa (AOF). In addition, the certificates obtained at graduation from most of them could not be used for entry into higher education. They were not valid in France, and there were no higher educational institution in the AOF area. They were useful only for entry into the lower administrative ranks in the colonies (Sabatier 1978).

### **After World War II**

After 1946 when the French Union was declared, education in the colonies was supposed to follow the same programmes and give the same qualifications as education in France (Capelle 1990, 32-33). All citizens of the colonies were in principle to have the same rights and obligations as the citizens of 'France métropolitaine.' This turned out to be a contested programme. The former colonial administrators were not happy with the idea of actually having Africans as their equals. Alongside the idealistic vision of the Union as a brotherhood of equals, there were strong currents trying to maintain French hegemony in the colonies. During the late 40s and the 50s, some of the programme for education came into being, but the processes of independence were by then also well underway. Most of the colonies gained their independence around 1960, and had to shape their own educational policy from then on.

Cameroon as a former League of the Nations mandat area became a trusteeship of the United Nations after world War II, eventually to become independent. It thus had a somewhat different status, though this did not save it from violence in the last years before independence was a fact in 1960. France did its best to get Cameroon into the new political entity of the Communauté Française as soon as independence was declared. This would have meant that Cameroon would have had inner autonomy, while France directed defense and foreign policy (Atangana 1997). This did not quite succeed, though some accords between the Cameroonian state and France were signed. Nonetheless, Cameroon continued to have close economic and cultural connections with France after independence

(Atangana 1997).

Cameroon was slightly better off in educational quantity than the other French colonies of West Africa, because of the large educational activity of the missionary organisations in the country. Capelle (1990, 56) cites 192 public schools and 1074 private schools in Cameroon in 1949-50, a total of 1266 schools, while the *Afrique Occidentale Française*, encompassing the modern states of Mauritania, Senegal, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea, had 889 public schools and 237 private schools, a total of only 1126 schools.

When new laws of education were passed in 1952 and 1953, the importance of the private religious schools was recognised by the fact that the protestants and the catholics each should have a representative in the central administration of the public and private schooling. The laws were an effort to augment both the quality and the number of schools. The schools should be divided in the strictly religious schools and the primary schools. The private schools could get increased and dependable subsidies, but all the teachers would be required to be certified. Public inspectors should inspect all schools, both on teaching and book-keeping (Lode 1990, 141).

In the last years before independence, the French administration tried to build up a more educated elite who could take over as leaders when the colonial administration was withdrawn. In Cameroon this led to the establishment of four colleges of secondary education, in Yaounde, Douala, Nkongsamba and Garoua (Atangana 1996, 235, 239). A university was established only two years after the independence, in Yaounde in 1962. It branched out with more faculties and 'grandes écoles' in the 1970s. An important restructuring of tertiary education took place in 1992-3, when the old university of Yaounde was divided into Yaounde I and II, and four new universities were established, in Buea, Dschang, Douala and Ngaoundéré (see [http://www.minesup.gov.cm/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=85&Itemid=77](http://www.minesup.gov.cm/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=85&Itemid=77)).

### **6.1.3 Missionary schooling in Adamaoua**

As noted above, many missionary organisations established numerous primary schools. The principal mission societies working in the Adamaoua was the Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS), the Sudan Mission (SM), the Mission Presbyterienne (MP), the Mission Fraternelle Luthérienne (MFL), the Sudan United Mission (SUM) and the Catholic church. They had somewhat differing aims and ideals in their work. The SM did not want to have schools till after the war, they thought that education for the Christians would mean only that they left working for the mission (Lode 1990, 137). The MP on the other hand, had a large educational program, and furnished the other missions with teachers.

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Schooling was defined as a key activity for the NMS from its very beginnings in the 1920s, but a proliferation of schools took place after World War II. In 1946, the NMS had 21 schools with 25 teachers and 367 students. In 1949, this had grown to 38 schools with 653 students. There were hardly any qualified teachers, however, and few of the schools had obtained administrative acknowledgement. During the next years, seven female teachers came from Norway and took up work with the schools, and the level of education rose noticeably in the NMS schools (Lode 1990). Most of the schools were elementary, but schools dispensing the two upper grades of primary education existed as well: Yoko was established already in 1942 (Lode 1990, 50), and Galim had a CM-class from 1953 to 1957, when it was transferred to Mbe. The CM-class in Galim was restarted later.<sup>2</sup>

A large meeting on education was held in Garoua in 1956, between representatives of the catholic and protestant missions and the colonial administration. For the future, nobody should start a school where somebody else had already started one, or had concrete plans to do so. The French administration would acknowledge first primary schools who had qualified teachers and used the official curriculum. As an extension of these authorised schools, the missions were permitted to establish satellite schools with only lower grades teaching. The best students from the satellites would be sent to the central, recognised schools for the upper grades (Cours moyen 1 and 2). Secondly, the administration recognised literacy courses for adults. The missions annexed to this teaching activity different religious courses, catechumen classes, courses for catechists, and bible schools. Neither the satellite primary schools nor the courses of religious instruction needed to have any authorisation, it was enough to inform the administration. The satellite schools were to become a very important tool for establishing Christian activity in many villages which heretofore had refused to have Christian workers (Lode 1990, 142).

The increasing educational activity brought up the need for more teachers. The Adamaoua-based missions tried to avoid too many teacher from the South in the unstable political climate at the end of the 50s, as these were liable to do political agitation. Therefore an attempt to create a teachers college was made in Ngaoundéré in 1958, teaching the first years of secondary school (sixième and cinquième), with a year of pedagogical training on top. The plans were subverted by the students themselves, however, they wanted a full-fledged high school education of four years, at least (Brevet d'études du premier cycle, BEPC). They threatened to leave the Protestant school and continue their studies at the catholic Collège Mazenod. This brought the missionaries to heel: the school was

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<sup>2</sup>I have not been able to establish the exact year of reestablishment of the CM class in Galim, but it was operative in the early 60s, possibly in conjunction with Miss Solveig Bjørø's period as *directrice* of the Galim private school from 1962 till 1966.

reorganised as the College Protestant de Ngaoundéré (Lode 1990, 141).

The reason to have schools was from the start the need for workers for the mission, but the NMS also saw the need for workers in the colonial administration. The administration was important to develop the country socially, and it would be advantageous for the missionary work if there were Christian civil servants (Lode 1990, 139). All the missions saw the schools as tools of evangelisation, and during the 50s, also as tools for claiming ground from each other. The protestant missions went to any length to capture villages from the catholic mission, sometimes overstressing their resources (Lode 1990, 138).

During the next decades, the mission schools turned indeed out to be a very effective means of evangelisation (Lode 1990, 181). The NMS had 5–7 missionaries with a pedagogical education working in the schools, as *directrices*, pedagogical consultants, course-holders for teachers, Sunday school supervisors and evangelists. This human resource was a very important factor in the development of the mission schools of the NMS.

### 6.1.4 The development after 1960

After independence was declared the 1st January 1960, the educational situation changed. According to Lode (1990, 176), two thirds of the primary school students were in private schools in 1960. During the 1960s the former harmonic cooperation between public and private school sectors became much more difficult. The old division of labour between the public administration and the different missionary organisations did not work any more. The State now often established public schools alongside existing missionary schools, creating competition.

The system of state authorisation for primary schools was upheld: the teachers had to be certified for the school to obtain authorisation. The schools must follow the State's curriculum, and there were certain requirements for buildings and facilities. The state heavily subsidised the teacher salaries in authorised schools, so authorisation was important. Nevertheless there were a large number of unauthorised schools run by the missions. These schools were headed by the directors of the primary schools, and usually followed the official curriculum, but often did not have the complete primary cycle, only the four lowest grades. During the 60s it became more and more difficult to obtain authorisation for the private schools, and unauthorised schools could be closed at any time by the authorities. In 1967 the unauthorised schools were finally closed down, and in 1968 the subsidies were reduced by 30 %. The NMS responded with an expansion effort, collecting money in Norway to build new schools and run properly the schools already in place. They also tried to increase school fees, but this could in any case provide a little fraction of the funds needed. In any case they succeeded

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in expanding their schools: from 59 teachers and 1816 students in 1960, there were 148 teachers and 5470 students in 1975 (Lode 1990, 182).

The private schools in the Galim and Gadjiwan area had severe difficulties, though. Parents did not send their children to school so willingly anymore. The sous-préfet in Tignère supported the parent's resistance. In 1960 there were ten schools and 241 students in these two districts; in 1975 these had been reduced to seven schools and 131 students (Lode 1990, 180). There was only one private school in Galim from 1967, with about 80–90 students each year (Lode 1990, 250). The first public school had been established there in the early 60s.

The process of establishing a national church on the bases of the Lutheran missions working in the Adamaoua was well under way in the beginning of the 70s. The transfer of competence to the Église Évangélique Luthérienne du Cameroun took place in 1976. From then on it was the EELC which was responsible for the private schools of the NMS and the SM (Soudan Mission).

The private schools have played an important role in primary education in the more than 40 years since independence. The private schools cover about 25 % here, while the percentage of private schools are even higher in secondary education, about 38–40 % in the last years (Expert panel 2003, 32). Nevertheless, there is no question that the development of the public schools has long since outstripped the development of private schooling: public schools cover after all about 75 % of the primary education. However, the resources of the State are still not sufficient to cover all the needs for education, which is why the State after all has welcomed the efforts of the missions and churches in the schooling sector.

In 1984 when things came to a head in the education department of the EELC with a major economic crisis, the State took charge by covering the deficit. Enormous deficits in the operations of the schools had accumulated over many years as work had expanded without a healthy economic basis for running the schools. The NMS was no longer willing to bail out the situation. Finally the State opted for paying the deficit and let the church continue to operate the schools, with subsidies from the State as before. This was after all a less expensive solution than having the private schools transferred to the public school system once and for all (Lode 1990, 186). The structural problem of the education department of the EELC was not ended by this, and today they have reduced their activities quite a bit, while still keeping a number of schools going. The private school in Galim has been closed since about the mid 1980s, and the buildings are today used only for Sunday school activities.

### 6.1.5 Crisis and progress

By the end of the 1980s, Cameroon entered a period of severe economic setbacks. The general crisis of the economy was aggravated in the educational sector by

the restructuration demands made by the World Bank. A freeze of recruitment of civil servants, teachers included, was followed by the closing down of the teacher colleges from 1987 till 1996 (Équipe Nationale de la Revue Prospective, coordonnateur: Yakouba Yaya 1999, 5,14). While the number of children in school age increased by nearly 800 000 from 1 417 745 in 1990 till 2 199 385 in 1999, the number of teachers actually decreased by more than 12 000 in the same period, from 26500 to 14 233. To have a teacher/student rate of 1/50, more than 15000 teachers were needed in 1998, while a rate of 1/40 would demand more than 23 000 new teachers.

The attempts of solutions for the severe unbalance in the educational sector were several. In the first place, classes were simply enlarged; but this was evidently not a good solution, as the quality of teaching will suffer greatly when the classes are too large. Another solution was the use of parent-paid or voluntary teachers. Some of these have done a good job, but many have no pedagogical training whatsoever, and consequently cannot be expected to deliver very good results. A further solution was the creation of the so-called ‘instituteurs vacataires’. These were trained teachers, but they were engaged on temporary contracts rather than being fully integrated in the civil services. Their salary was lower than the ordinary teacher salary, and the total expenses of the civil services were kept down by reallocating funds, all in order to satisfy the demands of the World Bank restructuration programme (Équipe Nationale de la Revue Prospective, coordonnateur: Yakouba Yaya 1999, 16).

As the crisis slowly eased towards the end of the 90s, the State has been able to recruit teachers again. The teacher colleges were reopened in 1996, but there is no longer any guarantee to get a teaching post upon graduation as teacher. There are still thousands of ‘vacataires’ in the schools, but each year some more are integrated in the *fonction publique* and enter the coveted state of civil servant.

The final development in the primary schooling in Adamaoua seems to be increased efforts by the State to establish public schools, after the year 2000. The millenium goals have played their role, and there is today quite a strong emphasis on catering to the needs of the children to get an education. Annual reports on the state of the indicators for the millenium goals exist, and show that there have been considerable progress (Gouvernement du Cameroun, OMD Progrès 2002, Gouvernement du Cameroun, OMD Progrès 2003). A number of schools have been established, and the number of teachers does increase.

### 6.2 The educational system today

Today’s educational system in Cameroon is divided in an anglophone and a francophone sub-system. The anglophone system has 7 grades and is mostly used

## 6.2. THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TODAY

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in the Western anglophone provinces, though anglophone schools exist in other provinces as well. I will not comment further on its setup and differences with the francophone sub-system, as there is no school using the anglophone system in my target area.

Grade	French name	English translation
SIL	Section d'initiation liminaire	Section of preliminary initiation
CP	Cours préparatoire	Preparatory course
CE1	Cours élémentaire 1ère année	Elementary course, 1st year
CE2	Cours élémentaire 2ème année	Elementary course, 2nd year
CM1	Cours moyen 1ère année	Intermediate course, 1st year
CM2	Cours moyen 2ème année	Intermediate course, 2nd year

Table 6.1: The grades of the primary level in the Francophone system.

In the francophone sub-system, there are the following five levels of education:

1. **École maternelle** (kindergarten), with two or three age groups or *sections*
2. **Primaire** (primary), six grades, see table 6.1, completed by the CEP, Certificat d'Étude Primaire.
3. **Post-primaire** (post-primary),
4. **Secondaire deuxième cycle** (secondary second cycle)
5. **Éducation supérieure** (higher education) All university-level educations

The primary level is completed with the CEP exam (Certificat d'Étude Primaire) taken in CM2. The post-primary level branches into two different directions, one general and one technical:

- *Enseignement secondaire général premier cycle*, with four grades: 6ème, 5ème, 4ème and 3ème. It is completed by the **BEPC**, Brevet d'Études du Premier Cycle.
- *Enseignement secondaire technique premier cycle*, with four grades: 1ère, 2ème, 3ème and 4ème année. It is completed by the **CAP**, Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnel.

To continue education into the general secondary, the student must pass the exam called *Entrée à la sixième*. The general secondary education is by far the most numerous in students, in 2002/2003 there were 669 129 students in the general

branch, while only 137 044 were in technical secondary, for the country as a whole (INS 2006, tables 6.52 and 6.68).

The *deuxième cycle* of the secondary education continues the two branches from the post-primary cycle, and adds a third one:

- *Secondaire général, deuxième cycle* (general secondary), three grades: Seconde, Première and Terminal. Première finishes with the Probatoire exam, and Terminal is completed with the **BACC**, the Baccalauréat Générale.
- *Secondaire technique, deuxième cycle* (technical secondary), three grades: Seconde, Première and Terminal. It is completed with the **BACC T**, Baccalauréat Technique.
- *Ecole normale* (teachers college); the length of the study depends on the level of the student before starting. BACC -one year, Probatoire -two years, BEPC -three years. It is completed with the CAPIEMP, Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique d'Instituteur de l'Enseignement Maternel et Primaire.

Since late in 2004, the levels of primary and secondary education are under the direction of two different ministries, the Ministry of Basic Education (Ministère de l'éducation de base, MINEDUB) and the Ministry of Secondary Educations (Ministère des enseignements secondaires, MINESEC), replacing the former Ministry of Education (MINEDUC).

The number of teacher colleges has risen in the last years, and there are now 36 ENIEGs or *Écoles Normales d'Instituteurs de l'Enseignement général*, spread over the whole country (Équipe Nationale de la Revue Prospective, coordonnateur: Yakouba Yaya 1999, 6). As far as my target area is concerned, there is an ENIEG in Tignère.

### 6.3 Schools in the target area

There were in 2005 18 public schools and one kindergarten in the Galim-Tignère arrondissement, a further four so-called parent's schools, and a parent-paid teacher working in a public school (Ngouri Bari). A list of the villages with schools, number of teachers in each school and whether all six years of the primary cycle were taught or not, is given in Tables 6.2 on the facing page and 6.3 on page 228, (Mathieu 2005).

For some schools, the number of students present in September 2005 is given as well. These numbers come from a reunion for school directors the 23rd



### 6.3. SCHOOLS IN THE TARGET AREA

Village	Teachers	Primary cycle	Enrolled students
Galim Maternelle	2	(2 age groups)	48
Galim, Gr 1	5	complete	430
Galim Gr 2	4	complete	232
Galim Gr 3	4	complete	203
Djamboutou Nastirde	2	complete	93
Garbaya 2	2	complete	?
Mayo Dankali	3	complete	185
Lompta	3	complete	180
Ngouri Bari	2(3)	complete	120
Wogomdou	3	complete	275
Mboudouwa	2	complete	?
Taagouri	2	complete	?
Ngouri 2	1	incomplete	23
Bontadji 1	1	incomplete	61
Bontadji 2	1	incomplete	86
Mbabo	1	incomplete	?
Tchabbal Kesse	1	incomplete	?
Leggal Goro	1	incomplete	?
Gonkira	1	incomplete	ca. 30

Table 6.2: Public schools in Galim-Tignère, 2005-06

Septembre 2005 at the Office of Basic Education Inspection in Galim, where I attended. None of the parent's school teachers were there. Seventeen of the nineteen ordinary public school directors were present, but some of them had so newly been transferred to their schools that they did not yet know the number of students. Several of the directors said that they expected to get more students in October, after end of harvest-time. The sum of the students in the table is 1763, but as no statistic is known for ten schools, this is much too low. Some of the missing schools are in comparatively small villages, and with a tentative mean number of 50 in each school, another 500 students can be added to the score.

#### 6.3.1 School facilities in the target area

Schools in my target area of Galim-Tignère range from well-built and quite new concrete buildings to simple straw hangars. The oldest school is Groupe 1 in Galim, it was established in the early 60s, and has now five buildings in use, while

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Village	Teachers	Primary cycle	Enrolled students
Mayo Sanganare	1	incomplete	?
Djem 2	1	incomplete	?
Assawe	1	incomplete	?
Mayo Beli	1	incomplete	?
Ngouri Bari	1	complete	(see table 5.1)

Table 6.3: Parent's schools and parent-paid teachers in Galim-Tignère, 2005-06

a sixth building is derelict. Two further buildings on the side of the large school yard now house the kindergarten and the offices of the School inspection in Galim-Tignère. The buildings and furniture of Groupe 1 are worn down, several roofs are leaky. There is in principle wooden shutters on the windows of the oldest buildings, but they are falling off, and it is not difficult to get in. Three of the houses (together with the derelict one) stand on the crest of a little slope and are very exposed to high winds in rainy season, the sheets of corrugated iron easily coming off. The Groupe 1 is commonly called the 'School of the Hausa' since it is close to the Hausa quartier and has most children of Hausa origin. When built it was outside the southern perimeter of the village, and still was as late as in 1984,<sup>3</sup> but has since the late 1990s slowly been surrounded by Galim expanding in this direction. It has five teachers, and only the fifth and sixth grade are paired up.

The other two schools in Galim were quite new, built in 2000 and 2001 respectively. The buildings are still sound, and the furniture in good condition. Groupe 2 especially has good facilities: six class rooms distributed in two single and two double pavilionshaped houses, further an administration building and latrines connected to a cisterne and water tower. Even electrical light fixtures are in place in all rooms. These last niceties are of course not very important as long as there is no electricity to power lights and waterpump. The houses face inward to a roughly hexagonal school yard, echoing the shape of the pavilions. The windows consist of open lattice concrete work, letting in air and light, but also winds and dust. The school is built to the same pattern as some 50 other primary schools scattered around the Adamaoua province as gifts from Saudi-Arabia. Even school books were part of the parcel. The school caters to the Quartiers Faada and Gonkira, both predominantly Nizaa, and is consequently called the 'Nizaa school'. It lies some 200-300 m outside the northern end of the village, across the road from the Sousprefecture office building. There are four teachers there, so classes have to be paired up to have enough teachers to go

<sup>3</sup>Rolf Theil, personal communication.

### 6.3. SCHOOLS IN THE TARGET AREA

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around. At the start of the school year in 2005, fifth and sixth grade were paired up, along with third and fourth grade, but when this last class became altogether too large (130+ students), the Directeur decided to divide it and rather keep SIL and CP together, which meant a class of some 80 students only.

Groupe 3 is called the 'school of the Koole', since the nearby Tike quartier has a large population of Kanuri-speaking people (sg. *Kooleejo*, pl. *Koole'en* in Fulfulde, 4.4 on page 108). It lies on a little rise on the west side of the village, again on the outskirts of the residential areas, looking over the flats along the Vuure river. It has three long buildings facing inwards around a schoolyard. There are two or three class rooms in each building, the building in the middle also accommodates the headmaster's office. As for the other schools, there are covered verandahs in front of each building to provide shelter for both sun and rain in pauses. A flag pole is placed in the middle of the open side of the school yard square. Again concrete lattice is used for windows, in an attractive pattern of arches. The lay-out of the Groupe 3 school is a common one for public schools built in the last decade or two, though smaller villages are more likely to have only two buildings. There are four teachers, and only the first and the second grade classes are taught apart, the third and fourth grades and the fifth and sixth grades are paired up.

The village schools are of varying ages and standards. The larger villages such as Wogomdou, Mayo Dankali, Garbaya and Lompta have had schools for many years, and have concrete buildings. In Wogomdou the main building has two class rooms, after the collapse of third class room in rainy season some years ago. The parent's association had managed to build a new class room, of sun dried bricks and with corrugated iron roof, but it had never been quite finished. A couple of sheets were lacking on the roof, a piece of the wall had come down, and there were no proper doors or window shutters when I visited the school in September 2005. A straw hangar, that is a structure with straw roof and no walls, had also been constructed and used as a class room last year, since there were no lack of students. Wogomdou is a predominantly Nizaa village, but some Hausa and Fulbe also live there. There are three teachers, so all the classes are paired up.

In Lompta the school facilities have a similar story: there are two concrete buildings, but one building had later been ravaged by a fire and was now an empty roofless shell. The lamido's entrance hut was used as a class room instead. There are three teachers, and the classes thus comprise two grades each.

Lompta is originally a village of nomadic Fulbe pastoralists, but also have people of other ethnic groups such as Pere. The lamido of Galim had a conflict with the lamido of Lompta when I was there in 2005. This directly caused the Nizaa of Sabongari, a village about 1 km away, to refuse sending their children to the school in Lompta, on the grounds of supporting their lamido. They wanted their own school. In the meantime some children were sent to school in Galim (6

km away) or kept at home.

The school of Gonkira in a little village almost entirely Nizaa is an example of the smaller village schools with only one teacher and an incomplete cycle of grades. It was officially created as a public school only in 2005<sup>4</sup>, after 4 or 5 years as a parent's school. The school is a straw thatched structure with walls of woven raphia. The dirt floor has not been stamped. The children sit on low benches made of raphia poles resting on forked branches. The blackboard has had a severe termite attack and was in two pieces, but a new one was procured by the teacher in the Spring term, with funding from the parents's association. The teacher has a rickety table and a chair.

### 6.3.2 Classroom layout

All the students face the blackboard and the teacher stays most of the time in the space between the blackboard and the students. In classes containing two or more grades, the class would be divided with one grade to the left and the other to the right. There were sometimes blackboards in both ends of the class room, so that the different groups could face different ways. This would sometimes be exploited by having one grade do assignments from the blackboard in one end, while the teacher taught the other grade from the other end.

The teacher's desk is normally towards the far corner in front of the class, rather than straight in the middle. Some teachers prefer to have their desk on the side, sitting sideways to the class.

The students sit at desks with fixed tables and benches in the more well developed schools, or at more simple benches without tables in recently established schools. Desks were spaced for at least 2 students, while 3 could sit there. In crowded classrooms 4 students or more sometimes had to share a desk.

### 6.3.3 Students

Classes start out as a more or less haphazard collection of kids, usually from more or less the same neighbourhood. Some will know each other well, others will not have met much. In Galim with its 3 schools and ethnic clusters in the different 'quartiers' of the village, most of the children will have a common ethnic background. Here the actual setup of each class is a function of parent's choices of school and the director's choice of appropriate class level for the newcomers

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<sup>4</sup>Actually it was created in 2004, but there were staff problems the first year, so the first government teacher came there late in September 2005.

### 6.3. SCHOOLS IN THE TARGET AREA

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and oldtimers. Each grade is terminated by a test according to which a child is promoted to the next grade or kept to redo the grade.

Generally all new children are assigned to the SIL class, regardless of age. Where schools have existed for many years, as in Galim and some of the larger villages around it, most SIL newcomers are also more or less the right age of 6 years. The age distribution was different in villages where the school had been recently installed, as in Gonkira. Here the SIL children (grade 1) were any age between 6 and 12, though the majority were quite young. The CP class (grade 2) students were all ages from about 7 or 8 years till teenagers of 16 and 17. There had not been any possibility of going to school at all till 5 years ago, when the first parent's school was started here. Those now in CP had spent some time in the parent's school and so were admitted to the CP class when the public school was established.

#### 6.3.4 Languages in class

The use of French as the medium of instruction is a kind of overarching practice as far as verbal practices are concerned. The use of indigenous languages has for many years been strictly forbidden in Cameroonian schools, but is now in principle allowed. There are still many teachers who expressly forbid the use of other languages than French and English, and who punish students who do otherwise. In one class I saw the teacher hang cattle shoulderblades around the necks of two students for a few minutes, when they were caught speaking 'le patois'. Elsewhere they were severely chided or threatened with hoeing the school grounds for speaking local languages.

But some teachers would occasionally use Fulfulde to explain things in class, or at least put in a translation of a keyword or two to facilitate comprehension. Many would use it to get important informations themselves, when the student clearly was not able to communicate in French. Examples are getting names of the students or dealing with conflicts between students, thus situations connected to class management, rather than situations directly connected to school subject matters.

When the teachers used any other language than French, it was normally Fulfulde. The use of Fulfulde was more common in lower grades than in more advanced grades. As we saw in 4.4 on page 108, there is an asymmetrical knowledge of languages in the area, with Fulfulde being the first or the second language of the majority. On the other hand, many of the teachers came from other parts of Cameroon, and did not know Fulfulde at all before arriving here. They still preferred to try and learn some of this language instead of e.g. Nizaa, since it is directly useful for living in Galim or in the bush around.

Nizaa was rarely, if ever used in school. Only two teachers among those I

met were Nizaa themselves, and one of them taught in a school with a very small proportion of Nizaa children, if any (Group 3 in Galim). The second taught a 5th and 6th grade together, in a village with a high proportion of Nizaa children, but at this age it is possible to use French.

A little story well illustrates most teachers' view of indigenous languages. I had prepared a questionnaire for the teachers, asking among other things what languages they did speak. The sheets were brought home and answered individually. When the first sheets were returned, I was astonished to see that no Cameroonian language were mentioned, only French, English, and Spanish or German. These teachers did not think that their first languages or other indigenous languages counted as real languages, they were only 'des patois': actually they were surprised that I would call them languages at all. This applied even for teachers who had no qualms about speaking of themselves as Mundang, Bamileke or Tupuri. After that I explicitly asked each teacher who was given the sheet to mention all languages that he knew, not only the European languages he had learnt at school.

### 6.4 Childhood in the social structure

In the preceding chapters I several times noted the place of children within the social fabric of the people of the Galim area. In any society, childhood is an important structural form or category, something the society as such manages in one way or another (Corsaro 1997). Children are necessarily receivers of services and resources, but they usually also contribute their own labor. They may serve important roles without which the society could hardly function. Though the members of the child category constantly change, there is a societal continuity in how they fit into the larger scheme of things.

In our case, we saw how the *purdah* institution easily translates into a situation where children are important as message bearers and street vendors for their mothers (see 4.6.1 on page 131). Even more important in the specific Nizaa agricultural context, is working the fields and later guarding them from being ravaged by birds and animals; these are basic subsistence tasks. Children are also important caregivers for babies and toddlers, as child care is a work routinely carried out by an elder brother or sister. Generally, they have many tasks within the household, such as fetching water and wood, sweeping the compound and generally helping with cooking, all of which spare the mother's time and often enable her to carry out cash income activities. The very real contributions of children to the household are part of the reason why so many families have young relatives staying with them in addition to their own children (see 4.5.1 on page 118).

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It is also one of the reasons why parents are slow to send their children to school: their labour is needed at home. Actually this was a recurrent theme in teachers' talk about the parents at the 'Nizaa' public school in Galim, Groupe 2. At the start of the schoolyear in September, there was a steady trickle of people passing by on a footpath quite close to the school, carrying tools to work in their fields, or coming back with large baskets of corn cobs on their head. School age children were numerous in the procession, and were sourly observed by the teachers. They complained that if they tried to talk to the parents about the children's need to be at school, the parents would only remark that field work was necessary if the child wanted to eat. Then as harvesting time came to an end in September and early October, classes at Groupe 2 would slowly fill up, till heavy field work would start again in May.

Ways of transmitting knowledge to new generations are an obvious part of childhood as a social structural form, but with different manifestations in different societies. The modern school system as we know it today has grown out of the industrialised societies of the West, and are closely tied to the structure and ideology of these societies. Schools here enter the economic production of a society by employing thousands of teachers and school administrators, and by engendering building projects and decisions of urban planning. Children as such are not part of the educational workforce, they are only objects for the work activities of adults.

Western-style schooling often strongly emphasises children as receivers of a service rather than as contributors to society. Though children in school do produce knowledge together with their teachers, this is rarely recognised as a valuable contribution to society, due to the focus on children as immature and passive receivers on their way to become productive adults (Corsaro 1997, 36). The knowledge produced is usually also not perceived as 'new', but rather as reproductions of what is already well known.

In an African context, schooling with its inherent perspective on children as unproductive and immature members of society may ideologically considerably change the status of children. This change is also connected to the economic realities underpinning a fully developed school system which encompass all children of a certain age. From their traditional role of being valuable contributors to their families, children become much less productive in the family context. Instead parents must pay for books and writing materials, new clothes, even the teacher's salary sometimes. Schooling may thus mean a change from looking at children as resources and possibilities, to looking at children as economical liabilities which one cannot afford to have. Families in and around Galim grapple with these questions as they navigate between the conflicting demands of the state of Cameroon, of religious practices, of obligations to relatives, and of trying to give their children a brighter future while relying also on their labour in daily

subsistence.



## Chapter 7

### Practice and interaction in the classroom

On a number of occasions during my field work in Galim, there were quite visible and audible effects when I entered a classroom. The class would rise and intone a greeting, usually in English, going: “Good morning, Madam!” to which the correct answer was “Good morning class! How are you?” The class then answered in unison, nicely accentuated on light and heavy beats: “I’m **fine**, how are **you**?” Then it was my turn to say “I’m fine.” That was the end of the dialogue, and most eyes would turn to the teacher who normally settled the class down again and proceeded to listen to whatever I wanted.

Now I was not particularly interested in doing class greetings, I just wanted to sit down as inobtrusively as possible in a corner and observe the class working. Neither was I well versed in how to do this dialogue, and initially I missed out on important points, e.g. by forgetting to ask “How are you?” The class would answer “I’m fine” anyway, as they were experienced participants in this little exchange. Thus the dialogue would be completed to everybody’s satisfaction, except maybe myself who was conscious of not having performed my role properly.

What does this little story show? One way to interpret it is to say that it shows that the children were not very proficient in English, which is after all a subject taught as Second language from Grade 1 (SIL). They obviously did not understand the English phrases, and they were not able to cope with a divergent reply and come up with a new response. One could go on to lament the bad effects of rote learning, which locks the children into predefined tracks and give them no tools to be creative.

I would rather propose another perspective to understand these episodes, using the community of practice theory (Lave & Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998). The episodes were instantiations of a practice which the class had learned. Within the

frames of the practice, they were the ones who could do it competently, while I did it wrong. The children in the Galim area know very well that people should be greeted and that there are several fixed forms for doing so appropriately. As far as the children were concerned, they delivered an appropriate greeting to me as an adult guest in class, the way they had been taught to do it in school. After a few times, I knew it as well, and was able to carry out the dialogue properly. Despite its strongly scripted wording and behaviour pattern, these occasions were for me moments of actual interaction with the children in class, instead of the solitary observer's role I usually assumed. I was drawn directly into their community of practice for a few short moments.

This little story illustrates well how a community of practice works. Engaging oneself in the same practices as others is a powerful tool of becoming part of their group. Children starting school are rapidly drawn into the practices of the classroom, doing what the others do, at first often with very little understanding of why and how things are done. As time goes by, they learn to do things well and without hesitation, and often internalise the practices to an extent where the question why? becomes meaningless, because this is the way things are done (Wenger 1998, 84).

In the following sections I first look at the theory of community of practice as an analytical tool and how it can be applied to my data, in 7.1 below. Then I look at how classroom practice is established, in 7.2. In 7.3, I analyse examples of classroom language use from two different schools, looking at the negotiation of meaning taking place in the double processes of participation and reification. In 7.4, I compare the two classes as communities of practice, looking at the differences of developing traits.

## **7.1 Community of practice theory as analytical tool**

How can the idea of a community of practice be applied to schools and classrooms? What do we gain from using this perspective? What should the practice of such communities be called? What can it tell us about linguistic interaction patterns?

The defining point of a community of practice is the actual interaction of people over time, making a more or less recognised group with a joint practice emerge, see 2.1.4. This makes schools and classrooms very obvious locations for communities of practice to evolve. As an analytical tool, the theory aims to describe how a group of people “make sense of their daily activities,” (Wenger 1998, 123). It takes *shared learning* to be the basic part of these activities: through engaging with each other in order to carry out their enterprise, people come to learn how to deal with others and to produce resources for doing

so. In negotiation meaning both participation in the practice and reification of the practice are involved.

### 7.1.1 Some key terms and their uses

In the following paragraphs, I describe some key terms in the theory as used in the present work.

#### **Practice**

In community of practice theory, ‘practice’ is a global concept, encompassing any kind of activity developed by a group regularly interacting, pertaining to their actual life together. Each activity may be described as ‘a practice’ by itself, but the sum is ‘practice’, not so many ‘practices’. The individual practices may be in conflict with each other, pulling in different directions, but still be part of the total picture of the group practice. We may think of a group constantly bickering about how to do some task, and fractions doing it in different ways, setting off new discussions: this whole complex of acting out the engagement with each other would be part of the community’s practice.

Importantly, ‘practice’ in this sense is not only about those routines which directly pertain to the task at hand as defined by some institution, that is pedagogical practices in the context of schools. This allows for looking not only at pedagogical practices as such in classroom observations (evaluated on the basis of their effectiveness as measured by marks), but also at any kind of interactional pattern. They can be analysed as ways of negotiating meaning, regardless of whether they are meant to teach the students some school subject or not (Wenger 1998, 82). Community of practice theory thus gives a more comprehensive view of the activities in which the students participate when engaging with each other and the teacher.

#### **‘Doing school’**

So what is practice about in the case of schools? In francophone Cameroon, the normal idiom for talking about attending school is *fréquenter*. The metropolitan dictionary definitions of this French verb mention such meanings as visit regularly, be affiliated with somebody, and in collocation with *l’école*, to attend school. In Cameroon, however, it is no longer necessary to say the word ‘school’, *fréquenter* means ‘attend school’ all by itself. The fact that a person has, or has not, *fréquenté*, where he or she did so and for how long, are salient points of individual life stories. *Fréquenter* covers well the most basic aspect of the class as a community of practice: the members have to actually be where the practice takes

place, on a regular basis. But the word applies only to students, while the teachers would not describe their work as *fréquenter*. A more comprehensive term is thus needed to cover both students and teachers, and also to cover the constant mutual engagement that goes on within a class. To capture the whole scope of practice in class I propose *doing school* as a shorthand term for practice in the context of classrooms.

### Learning

The theory is fundamentally a theory of learning, using the notion of the *zone of legitimate peripheral participation* to explain how newcomers learn. In this zone, they are not expected to be competent participants right away, there is some leeway for them to learn the game before being held accountable for their actions to the group. To be in the zone normally entails doing whatever the practice of the community is about, but with many tasks made easier, with a possibility of asking questions and observing other's competent performance, before having to do it perfectly. A task in analysing classroom data is simply to look at how the 'zone of legitimate peripheral participation' is played out and what happens in it.

The learning perspective is obviously interesting to apply to a school setting, with its pronounced goal of learning. What does the theory tell us about how learning is achieved? Do the goals of learning expressed in plans and curricula correspond to what is actually learned? Are there tensions between class practice and the goals stated in the official discourse around school education?

### Identity

While some of the communities a person belongs to will be important in shaping her identity, others may be peripheral in her life. Multimembership is normal, as communities of practice are not mutually exclusive. Still, there are discontinuities between different groups, and the very notion of a defined membership entails *boundaries* to other aggregates of people engaged in other practices. When practices clash in some way, it is necessary to maintain a personal identity by reconciliation work (Wenger 1998, 158). *Boundary encounters* and *boundary objects* are vital in such processes. A *boundary encounter* is an engagement with other groups and practices, while *boundary objects* reach across boundaries.<sup>1</sup> Such objects have functions in more than one community of practice, even though the practices can be quite different. A question to ask is by what means participants signal their identities in and out of class.

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<sup>1</sup>Boundary objects "serve to coordinate the perspectives of various constituencies," Wenger (1998, 106). The term was coined by Susan Leigh Star, see e.g. Star & Griesemer (1989).

Because the theory sees communities of practice as places for the negotiation of identities, it can be used to look at identity work on a number of levels (Wenger 1998). This is a pertinent aspect of the theory when applied to schooling. As many nations, Cameroon has an explicit identity formation goal for their primary school students. The excerpts from the *Loi d'Orientation de l'Education au Cameroun* that are cited in the preamble to the official syllabus of CE1 and CE2 state such goals clearly, as in e.g. the following sentence (my translation): 'The primary school should educate citizens who are "rooted in their culture but open to the world, honouring general interests and the common good."' (MINEDUC c.2001, 5).<sup>2</sup> Schools in Cameroon are *meant* to form the children's identities. To the degree that students become parts of local communities of practice in schools, we can expect this to happen.

### 7.1.2 The analytical scope of the theory

What then is the scope of the concept 'community of practice'? At what level does it meaningfully apply in the context of Cameroonian schools?

The concept of community of practice looks for larger pieces of interaction data than say, a single conversation, activity or event. When using a community of practice perspective, one is concerned with larger patterns, and routines developed over time. On the other hand, the concept loses its utility when faced with more abstract aggregates of people. When people do not interact directly and do not engage each other at all, not even by long distance communication such as mail, telephone or the internet, the concept of community of practice does not fit any longer (Wenger 1998, 124).

Beyond the level of communities of actually interacting participants, there can still be important continuities which are worthwhile to point out, such as shared historical roots or belonging to the same institution. However, these will not have the actual mutual engagement and the accountability to each other which characterise a community of practice. To capture such commonalities, it is better to employ the concept of a *constellation of practices* (Wenger 1998, 126-128). While constellations are not communities of practice in a strict sense, they can still be important focus points of identity for people involved in the different practices, by generating a sense of belonging.

#### Scope in Cameroonian schools

The Cameroonian school system has many continuities which make it possible to view it as one large community of practice. There are obvious likenesses and

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<sup>2</sup>Original text: 'L'Ecole Primaire doit former des futures citoyens "enracinés dans leur culture mais ouverts au monde et respectueux de l'intérêt général et du bien commun."'

common ways of doing things from one class to another, from one school to another and from the schools of one *departement* to another. The similarities arise basically from a common heritage, as described in Chapter 6, and they are maintained in many ways both institutionally and informally. The stipulations laid down by the official syllabuses and regulations shape everyday life in school. The teachers play a decisive role in carrying on established practices, both by drawing on their professional education from the teacher colleges and by drawing on their own schooling experiences. The students also carry on practices they learn in school and transfer them to new generations of students.

Still, communities of practice are more than anything people who actually interact with each other, that have a mutual engagement with each other. From this point of view, the school system becomes too large and disconnected to be a good candidate for an analysis taking it as one community of practice. Here the notion of a constellation of practices is much more apt.

Even schools may be too large: the students of the different classes do not necessarily have a close mutual engagement with each other. The breaks may of course be an exception to that, and groupings of students in breaks can manifest their own communities of practice (as shown by Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (1999)). In many cases, a school also will best be described by the concept of a constellation of practices. A large school with many classes is less likely to be one community of practice than a small school with very few classes and with close relations between students also outside classes, such as neighbour or sibling relations.

The teachers of one school, large or small, are more likely to form one community, though. They will often develop their own ways of dealing with each other and with their tasks, and maybe more or less align their practices in the different classes. At the same time, all the teachers of an *arrondissement* such as Galim-Tignère will form a distinct group with regular points of contact such as teacher reunions several times in the year. Such institutional boundaries as the group of teachers in one school or in one administrative division may over time come to be aligned with the boundaries of a community of practice.

### **The class**

The class is the most obvious locus for the development of communities of practice in a school context. Each class constitutes an aggregate of students and at least one teacher, who interact intensely over a long period. I would argue that classes normally evolve into communities of practice, with locally produced meanings, though one should always be aware of the more comprehensive scope of many practices. It is in the class as a community of practice that my main interest lies, and it is here I find that the concept of community of practice is best

matched with my data, both in analytical scope and as a tool for understanding.

The teacher's role in the class merits some further consideration. A community of practice does not have a built-in egalitarian setup, it may well contain hierarchies and power relations (Wenger 1998). In a less structured group developing into a community of practice, mutually defining identities such as leader(s) and followers often arise informally. Such identities are a typical trait of established communities of practice, as we can see in the list of traits on page 243. In the case of school classes there are institutional participation frameworks that governs much of how interaction takes place, with clear hierarchical relations between teachers and students (Erickson 2004, 181–184). Though the roles obviously are institutionally based, they are nevertheless part of 'doing school'. A community of practice perspective means looking at how a group of people actually use the institutional setting with its interactional infrastructure in their interaction and what local practices they develop as they are 'doing school' together.

### Goal of the analysis in this chapter

A possible extension of the idea of each class as a local community of practice is to use classes as units of analysis and compare them to each other. However, this goal would rather go along with a pedagogical interest in evaluating practices and change them to whatever seems to be a better way of 'doing school'.

My overall goal for the analysis of classroom practice is to use examples of 'doing school' in different classes to see how they make sense of their daily activities, and more specifically how they use language in this enterprise. A key to reach this goal is to use *speech genres* (cfr. 2.2.2 on page 26) as an analytical tool; this will be undertaken in Chapter 8. In the present chapter I look at how communities of practice are established in the classrooms, and the reificative and participatory processes of practice, mostly from a non-verbal perspective. My multimodal approach to interaction means, however, that both talk and other more non-verbal aspects of interaction are brought together, preparing for the more detailed analysis of language use in chapter 8.

### 7.1.3 Participation and reification

As any other community of practice, classes create a context for the negotiation of meaning in the dual processes of *participation* and *reification* (Wenger 1998, 55). Before going into these core processes, let us first look at a more fleshed out version of the three characteristics of a community of practice : *mutual engagement*, *joint enterprise*, *shared repertoire of communication* (cfr. 2.1.4 on page 20). I have labeled the practice in classes as 'doing school' and use this as

a name for the joint enterprise of classes. The joint enterprise of a community of practice is by no means to be understood only as some explicit goal agreed upon by everybody, rather the point is that it is communally negotiated (Wenger 1998, 78). Even when an outside mandate or prescription is what brings about interaction of the members in the first place, as in a classroom, there will be a local response to the outside forces, evolving into a local collective creation of a practice belonging to the community (Wenger 1998, 80). The criteria of a community of practice below is spelled out as *abilities* of the members of the community, defining competent memberships as noted in Wenger (1998, 137) below:

1. *Mutuality of engagement* – the ability to engage with other members and respond in kind to their actions, and thus the ability to establish relationships in which this mutuality is the basis for an identity of participation.
2. *Accountability* to the enterprise – the ability to understand the enterprise of a community of practice deeply enough to take some responsibility for it and contribute to its pursuit and to its ongoing negotiation by the community.
3. *Negotiability of the repertoire* – the ability to make use of the repertoire of practice to engage in it. This requires enough participation (personal or vicarious) in the history of a practice to recognize it in the elements of its repertoire. Then it requires the ability – both the capability and the legitimacy – to make this history meaningful.

Through mutual engagement, students and teachers *participate* in the practice of ‘doing school’. There are many ways of participating, the most basic is to actually come to school and sit down in the classroom. Others are engagement in different classroom activities: answering questions, lifting one’s hand to get a turn of speaking, doing assignments, reading and rehearsing individually and in chorus, chatting with other students, sharing chalk, etc. In the process of participation, members will normally broaden their abilities of mutual engagement, and become able to better handle a wider range of activities in the practice of ‘doing school’. As they come to attach meaning to the different activities, they also become able to take responsibility for the joint enterprise of the class, and they can hold themselves and others accountable for its success or otherwise. The ability to make use of the repertoire of communication is important in ‘doing school’ since so many of its activities are about carrying out communication in some form. The amount of participation seems to be the most important variable for developing the ability to use the repertoire well.

‘Doing school’ is also *reified* in a number of ways: there are artefacts such as school buildings, desks, blackboards, chalk and slates, textbooks and copybooks, there are written and oral texts in different genres, exams and certificates, together



with concepts and terms specific to schooling. Letters and punctuation and their different graphic designs are reifications of ‘doing school’ in their own right, so are numerals and mathematical operators. In most parts of Cameroon, even the entire language system used in school must be considered a reification: French<sup>3</sup> has inherited some of the ideological role given it in the days of colonial hegemony. It carries the load of symbolising a modern, coherent society where everybody is brought *up* to the level of civilisation where they can participate freely in the exchange of informations and opinions in society. French is still to a large degree considered the only legitimate language in school (cfr. 6.3.4 on page 231) and the most important subject for the students to master. Knowing French actually sums up what many of my informants took to be the point of ‘doing school’.

The reifications of ‘doing school’ impose a number of constraints on the activities of ‘doing school’. Simultaneously, ‘doing school’ is in many ways, most notably the institutionally defined ways, about mastering the reifications and recreate their institutionally sanctioned meanings for each member. Aspects of the accountability of members to each other can be reified into explicit rules, standards, or goals, other aspects remain implicit as tacit communal expectations of what constitutes competent engagement in practice (Wenger 1998, 82).

### 7.1.4 A closer look at traits

As time goes by, the joint pursuit of the enterprise will result in a shared repertoire of resources for negotiating meaning. This in itself is one of the three criterial characteristics cited on p. 242. It will exist in varying degrees in different communities of practice, the degree depending mostly on the time depth of the communities. The shared repertoire of a community of practice both indicates the existence of such a community and is an important part of its day-to-day reproduction. It includes “routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice” (Wenger 1998, 83).

In an established community of practice, then, we will normally find a number of traits stemming from the three main criteria of such a community. The following list is taken from Wenger (1998, 125-6):

#### Traits of a mature Community of Practice

1. Sustained mutual relationships – harmonious or conflictual.

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<sup>3</sup>English probably plays a similar role in the anglophone provinces, but as I have little first hand knowledge of that area, I address the case of French here.

2. Shared ways of engaging in doing things together.
3. The rapid flow of information and propagation of innovation.
4. Absence of introductory preambles, as if conversations and interactions were merely the continuation of an ongoing process.
5. Very quick setup of a problem to be discussed.
6. Substantial overlap in participants' descriptions of who belongs.
7. Knowing what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise.
8. Mutually defining identities.
9. The ability to assess the appropriateness of actions and products.
10. Specific tools, representations, and other artifacts.
11. Local lore, shared stories, inside jokes, knowing laughter.
12. Jargon and shortcuts to communication as well as the ease of producing new ones.
13. Certain styles recognised as displaying membership.
14. A shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective on the world.

Some of the traits listed above directly pertain to linguistic interaction, such as 4, 5, 11, 12 and 14. The others will in most cases be mediated through the use of language in some way, or use of language is one part of the activity or interaction, such as in 2 and 13. Objects reifying the practice as mentioned in 10, are also concepts and terms, and as I said above in our case also the entire linguistic code chosen for the interaction. Trait 10 thus has a linguistic part beside material objects and artifacts.

The list can be used as a heuristic tool, together with looking for a joint enterprise and mutual engagement, to see if an aggregate of people can be understood as a community of practice, which is the first objective of this chapter. Speech genres, as ways of interacting, are a useful concept to explore towards this end.

## **7.2 Establishing practice in the class**

A rather striking thing about Cameroonian classes is how quickly they get into the practice of 'doing school'. I observed two different SIL classes at the very beginning of the school year 2005-06, and one of them very much displayed some of the traits of the list in above, such as 'quick setup of a problem to be discussed',

and ‘absence of introductory preambles’, (points 3 and 4). How was it possible to have at least a part of the students acting as competent participants, even to know the answer to questions from the reader when the class as a whole never had heard them before?

The other class struggled quite a bit more, they had at best had a year or two of substandard schooling by an untrained teacher, and now started out with a new teacher. But the new teacher basically used the same strategy as in the first group, that is, he seemed to assume that they already had knowledge of, say, the contents of the reader. Why could he think this possible?

There is a quite practical reason why the transition from a haphazard collection of children in an institutionally defined group to a working community of practice can take place so quickly. The new teacher hits the nail on the head when he at one point asked his class rhetorically “Les redoublants, vous avez tout oublié?”, ‘Redoers, have you forgotten everything?’ The system of *redoublement* is a major force in making communities of practice out of schoolclasses in Cameroon. These mechanisms will be addressed in 7.2.1 and 7.2.2. In 7.2.3. and 7.2.4 I will show how and why teachers use the ‘redoers’ in class, with some field notes and transcription excerpts from the classes mentioned above.

### 7.2.1 Harsh realities: ‘Redoublants’ and drop-outs

Classes in Cameroon, and possibly in several other countries in Africa, have a characteristic which sets them apart from most European classes: the ‘redoing’ system. At the end of each year the students are tested to see if they are ready to move up, or if they should redo their class level (French: *redoubler*), and the teachers have little qualms about letting students redo a grade. So although a SIL class ideally consists of six-year-olds new to the practices of school, in reality there usually is a group of children who are doing SIL for the second or even the third time. Most classes have such a group of students who are doing a grade for the second time, and often enough a group who do it for the third or fourth time. For the country as a whole, the officiel MINEDUC statistic for 2003/2004 shows 25,32 % ‘redoublants’ of a total of 2 960 732 students in primary school (INS 2006, 77). What does this actually mean?

In their study of schooling in Maroua, Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek (1994, 141–148) give some numbers on the extent of redoing classes in that city in 1992–1993, see Table 7.1 on page 247. By looking at the record cards (*livret scolaire*) of a random sample of students at each grade level in a given year (1992–1993), they were able to establish some hard facts about the percentages of redoing classes in this city of the Extreme North province. Their tables give an account of the percentages in each grade sample of that year, who have done SIL in one year, in two years, in three years, in four years or even in five years,

then the percentage of those who have done the CP in one, two, three, four or five years, and so on. Table 7.1 on the facing page is a slightly adapted version of their tables, giving the percentage of 'redoers' (French: *redoublants*) in each grade sample. Unfortunately, they do not indicate whether their samples can be taken to be representative, only that they are random (over how many schools and neighbourhoods?) The number of subjects for the higher grades (the CM1 sample has 65, and the CM2 sample has only 29 subjects) are also lower than the rest, in part because the record cards of many students were not brought up to date. Neither do they stack the redoing numbers to show individual trajectories of schooling, since the lines for each grade can be read only horizontally. With these remarks, their numbers are a valuable contribution to understanding the mechanisms of schooling in Cameroon. They show that more than 50 % of a SIL class may be oldtimers, doing it for the second or more time: out of 107 SIL students, they found that only 42 % were first-timers in the SIL. Of the rest, 41 % were there for the second time, 11 % for the third time and 6 % for the fourth time.

The CP-sample is slightly different, here 78 % were first-timers, and 19 % were in CP for the second time, while 2 % had their third and 1 % their fourth go at CP. But of the total in CP, 38 % had done SIL twice, while 47 % had done SIL in only one year. 14 % and 1 % had spent three and four years in SIL, respectively. Thus even with 78 % first-timers, the medium time spent in school by the end of this year, was 3 years. For each grade sample, the same pattern is present: a substantial part of the students spend quite a bit more than the allotted 6 years in primary school.

In addition to the students who redo classes, there are also a number of students who disappear in the course of the year. The authors arrived at some indications of the number never making it through primary school by comparing the number of children entering SIL and those entering CM2 over 3 successive years (see Table 7.2 on page 248). An exact calculation of how many of those entering school in SIL actually finish the CM2 would have necessitated more time and better access to archives, to correct for the effects of redoing grades (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 147). Still, the table shows that more than half of the children entering school are missing at the other end.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, there seems to be more students in the two highest grades who have gone through SIL and CP in one year only, together with very few or none who have spent more than two years in the lowest grades, see Table 7.1 on the facing page. Comparatively few of the CM students have used 3 years or more in the middle grades, while doubling up is quite common both here and in the CM grades themselves. Does this show

<sup>4</sup>The percentage rise in 1992-93 is not a real increase in drop-outs, though, it is due to an increase in children starting in the SIL.

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Percentage of redoublants in SIL (N=107)

	1 yr.	2 yr.	3 yr.	4 yr.	5 yr.
SIL	42%	41%	11%	6%	0%

Percentage of redoublants in CP (N=94)

	1 yr.	2 yr.	3 yr.	4 yr.	5 yr.
SIL	47%	38%	14%	1%	0%
CP	78%	19%	2%	1%	0%

Percentage of redoublants in CE1 (N=78)

	1 yr.	2 yr.	3 yr.	4 yr.	5 yr.
SIL	41%	50%	8%	1%	0%
CP	71%	22%	6%	1%	0%
CE1	38%	31%	19%	12%	0%

Percentage of redoublants in CE2 (N=82)

	1 yr.	2 yr.	3 yr.	4 yr.	5 yr.
SIL	46%	50%	4%	0%	0%
CP	87%	12%	1%	0%	0%
CE1	27%	33%	27%	12%	1%
CE2	66%	28%	5%	1%	0%

Percentage of redoublants in CM1 (N=65)

	1 yr.	2 yr.	3 yr.	4 yr.	5 yr.
SIL	78%	20%	3%	0%	0%
CP	97%	8%	0%	0%	0%
CE1	35%	43%	17%	5%	1%
CE2	71%	21%	8%	0%	0%
CM1	62%	29%	9%	0%	0%

Percentage of redoublants in CM2 (N=29)

	1 yr.	2 yr.	3 yr.	4 yr.	5 yr.
SIL	69%	31%	0%	0%	0%
CP	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
CE1	48%	42%	10%	0%	0%
CE2	83%	17%	0%	0%	0%
CM1	41%	52%	7%	0%	0%
CM2	83%	14%	3%	0%	0%

Table 7.1: Percentages of redoers in Grade 1-6, Maroua 1992-1993.

Year	Enrolled SIL	Enrolled CM2	N missing	% missing
1990-1991	3699	1703	-1996	-54,0%
1991-1992	3768	1672	-2096	-55,6%
1992-1993	4359	1617	-2742	-63,0%

Table 7.2: Numbers of students entering SIL and students entering CM2 over 3 years, Maroua. (Adapted from Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek (1994, 119; 148).)

that there is a subgroup who bring certain advantages with them to school and that it is this subgroup who finally end up finishing primary school? Why do so many children struggle to get through school?

Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek (1994) point out that the highest levels of both dropping out and redoing are in the lower grades. There are some very real hurdles to pass for a child coming to school, and not everybody makes it, or they lose several years on the way. There are two main obstacles for the students, according to these authors. The first they label *le malaise linguistique*: the use of French as medium of instruction when the majority of students do not know French at all before starting school, and have few possibilities to practice French outside class (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 149). Fulfulde is the most common language in Maroua, but a number of other languages are spoken as well, and of these groups those who speak languages from southern Cameroon have the lowest percentages of 'redoublement', between 30 and 50 % make it through primary school without redoing classes. Giziga and Tupuri-speakers have the biggest problems, only some 10-15 % get through primary on schedule. Fulfulde- and Mundang-speakers are in the middle. For all groups there is more redoing of the last two classes, as the students struggle to pass the CEP and the admission exam to secondary education (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 155).

The other obstacle they label *le malaise psychologique*: the children are abruptly taken out of their home milieu and put in a group of unknown children with new and quite different expectations of them. Not much of what they are doing makes sense. They are crowded into overfilled classrooms where the teacher often keeps order with a whip. If breakfast was not ready before they went off to school, the child will be hungry for hours as well. No wonder that learning gets difficult and dropping out seems a better solution (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 155-163). The situation may be slightly better today, as Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek (1994) did their study when the economic crisis of Cameroon was at its height in the early 90s; for one thing, classes have many places later become smaller as a result of more teachers being engaged (see 6.1.5). Still, there is no question that going to school can be quite an ordeal for the children.

### 7.2.2 The effects of the ‘Redoublement’ pattern

The numbers cited above are striking, and show clearly that *redoublants* are a very common phenomenon in school in Cameroon. Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek (1994, 141) notes that the Extreme North province is among the weakest provinces of Cameroon as far as schooling is concerned. It is thus possible that the percentages of ‘redoublement’ are lower elsewhere, especially in the South. But as we saw in the official statistic of ‘redoublants’ of 2003-2004, cited above, there is every reason to believe that this phenomenon still exists in other areas as well, also in my target area. Redoers certainly were a visible element of many of the lessons I observed.<sup>5</sup> In any case, Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek (1994) see redoubling as a major problem, accounting in large part for the overfilled schools with classes regularly rising (far) above 80 students. In their view, the redoing of grades “[i]s a pervers phenomenon which makes the educational system even more inoperative; meant to remedy the weaknesses of a child by giving him a new chance of succeeding, it ends up choking the whole group.”<sup>6</sup> (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994, 142 (my translation)).

This is of course true, but for our perspective of looking at classes as communities of practice, the high percentage of redoers have another important side effect: it means that in addition to one expert member, the teacher, each class has a core of competent participants in the school practices, along with a group of newcomers who have not as yet learnt the ‘game.’ The teachers I observed seemed to play on this situation by drawing on the knowledgeable oldtimers.<sup>7</sup> Last year’s losers in class have their moment of glory at the start of a new year: they become those who can answer the questions, sing the songs, do the recitations, while the newcomers blunder through the days. Simultaneously, a zone of legitimate peripheral participation is created where newcomers can observe competent members engaging in practice. I shall go closer into this situation below.

#### Pedagogical approach and classroom terrain

The preferred teaching method in Cameroon employs elicitation questions to a large degree. Questions to elicit information already known to the teacher is a well-known pattern in many educational settings, used both to check the

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<sup>5</sup>I have not able to procure exact numbers of redoers in the classes I visited, or for the arrondissement as a whole.

<sup>6</sup>“A Maroua, le redoublement scolaire est de règle ; c’est un phénomène pervers, qui rend encore plus inopérant le système éducatif ; censé remédier aux faiblesses de l’enfant en lui donnant une nouvelle chance de réussir, il finit par asphyxier tout le groupe.”

<sup>7</sup>The same observation of the use of old-timers is made in Moore (2004, 378), on data from a SIL-class in Maroua, Extreme North, Cameroon.

knowledge level of the student and simultaneously to give the student an occasion to display his competence (Heath 1983, Erickson 2004). Its use in Cameroonian classrooms had a clearly articulated third use as well: to have other voices than the teacher's repeat information for the class to hear. Questions were here used to a nearly astounding degree, as compared to other genres usually found in school, such as lecturing or narratives. The main reason for this was its ideological link to a discourse of pedagogical method and also its relation to redoers in class.

The pedagogical method most in vogue in the Cameroonian teacher colleges is often dubbed *la nouvelle approche pédagogique*, 'the new pedagogical approach.' The tenets of the approach were readily articulated in conversations with the teachers I met: by asking questions, the teacher allows the student to express himself/herself and to draw on his/her own store of knowledge. Only memorising texts expounded by the teacher (the old 'dogmatic method') is not a good way of learning, the student should rather build his own lesson by way of answering the teacher's questions. By asking about the same item several times, the item is rehearsed and more students get to actually handle the item in a verbal response.

The salience of questions as an important activity in class is visible in the following comment made by the Mipom teacher at one of my visits in class, somewhat abruptly delivered in the middle of a session on a quite different theme.

**Transcript 7.1** *SIL & CP, Mipom, 30 January 2006.*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(1) <b>Teacher:</b> 06.03.1 (<i>the teacher is strolling up and down the aisle of the class; a number of students are looking absent-mindedly at me</i>) Vous voyez que elle est là (<i>turns, start forward</i>) comme ça pour-e [0.6] voir si vous travaillez. (<i>several look away, some embarrassed smiles</i>) [0.4] Hein? Si vous restez comme ça, mieux la- eh, (<i>turns</i>) elle va aller dire que, ooh, les enfants là connaissent même pas- hein? [0.4] hnh? [0.4] Ils ne travaillent pas, ils ne connaissent même pas. [0.3] Depuis là? Hein? [2.7] Elle veut voir comment vous travaillez et vouous- v- v- vouus participez à la question du maître. [4.2]</p> | <p>(1) <b>Teacher:</b> 06.03.1 (<i>the teacher is strolling up and down the aisle of the class; a number of students are looking absent-mindedly at me</i>) You see that she is there (<i>turns, start forward</i>) like that for-e [0.6] to see if you work. (<i>several look away, some embarrassed smiles</i>) [0.4] Hm? If you stay like that, better then- eh, (<i>turns</i>) she will go and say that, ooh, those children there don't even know- hm? [0.4] hnh? [0.4] They don't work, they don't even know. [0.3] Since? Hm? [2.7] She want to see how you work and yooou- y- y- youu participate in the teacher's question. [4.2]</p> |
|--|--|

This was to be the first of several remarks by the teacher on my presence in class; all the others were orders and admonitions to the class telling them not to look at



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the camera or be preoccupied with my presence instead of following the teacher.<sup>8</sup> But here the teacher chooses to point out to the class both the shame factor if they do not perform well in front of this visitor, and his idea of what they should do to present themselves as a diligently working and knowledgeable class: –participate in answering his questions. He thus verbally reifies a core practice in ‘doing school’.

A typical formulation of the ideas of the new pedagogical approach is found in the following quotation taken from a teacher college student’s thesis (my translation from French):

“The teaching method prescribed e.g. by the Ministry of Education is the active method, conforming to the new pedagogical approach; this means that it is centered on a particular activity from the student. MACAIRE tells us that the active method is an educational method based on trust and freedom.

According to him, these two factors (trust and freedom) move the student to spontaneous expression, to formulate his observations, to give his impressions, to freely pose his questions. He pushes even further by saying that with the active method, the student becomes the principal agent of his own education, because he acts instead of listening, looking and undergoing. In this way the student discovers science first-hand and educates himself. With this method, the teacher plays the role of a guide, he stimulates energies and encourages efforts, he suggests solutions to the problems, but does not receive them ready made.”<sup>9</sup>

— Hayatou (2007, 13)

The teachers were generally quite enthusiastic about these ideas, and spoke highly of how the new approach made the students express themselves. They took

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<sup>8</sup>As such they were rather telltale signs of the strict monofocality sought by the teachers I observed, see 7.3.1 on page 261.

<sup>9</sup>“La méthode d’enseignement que prescrit par ex- MINEDUC est la méthode active conformément à la nouvelle approche pédagogique ; c’est-à-dire celle qui est centrée sur une action particulière de l’élève. MACAIRE nous dit que la méthode active est une méthode d’éducation basée sur la confiance et la liberté. Selon lui, les deux facteurs (confiance et liberté) incitent l’élève à s’exprimer spontanément, à formuler ses observations, à donner ses impressions, à poser librement des questions. Il poursuit plus loin en disant qu’avec la méthode active, l’élève devient l’acteur principal de sa formation car il s’agit(\*) au lieu d’écouter, de regarder et de subir. Ainsi, l’élève découvre la science de première main et s’éduque lui-même. Dans cette méthode, l’enseignant joue le rôle de guide, il stimule les énergies et encourage les efforts, il suggère des solutions aux problèmes, mais ne les reçoit pas toutes faites.”

I have corrected in the translation what I take to be a typing error in the original (marked with (\*)). The reference in the excerpt is to Macaire 1979.

very seriously the admonition of letting the students construct their own lesson, something which e.g. made the verbal definition of a session's theme the very last item on the agenda. Instead of being announced by the teacher at the outset of the lesson, the teacher preferred to elicit the name of the subject from the student, as a proof that the students had been able to construct their own lesson.

None of the teachers I met ever commented upon the fact that information-seeking questions from the students were extremely rare, if not non-existent (I did not note a student question once in ca 100 hours of class observations). All questioning was from the teachers to the students; to have it the other way round seemed to go against the very grain of participation structure in school.

It was sometimes admitted that the method perhaps was better suited to students who knew French well, as one hardly could expect all students to have the vocabulary necessary to express themselves as they were supposed to. For the teachers, this problem only emphasised the necessity to learn French, as much and as quickly as possible. All lessons should be designed to be not only a subject lesson, but also a language lesson, a *leçon du langage*, so that the students would steadily increase their knowledge of French vocabulary and grammar and learn to use it for a variety of subject matters.

*La nouvelle approche pédagogique* creates a sort of symbiosis between the teacher and the redoers. The teacher seeks to have his questions correctly answered by students instead of telling the class the right answer himself. Thus the teacher actually needs redoers in class to answer his questions about things which newcomers cannot possibly know at first, such as the names of the characters of the reader and explicit turns of a dialogue.

### 7.2.3 The first day at school in Groupe 2, Galim

The following excerpts from my fieldnotes show examples of how *redoublants* are used as a resource in the classroom. The situation is from the very first day of school in a SIL class, first session in the morning.<sup>10</sup> The class has just come in after waiting for their classroom to be swept out. The teacher, Joey (all names are anonymised), has been in and out of the class once already to arrange some practical things, but he now enters and starts teaching. Joey is also the school headmaster, *le directeur*.

08:11

Teacher enters and says: "Tout le monde debout! Qui va entonner un chant?" ('Everybody stand up! Who will intone a song?') They sing a song. The teacher tells a boy to put something in his pocket, he doesn't seem to understand very well. They start on presentations.

<sup>10</sup>In my field notes, numbers such as 08:11 refers to clock time for start of action observed.

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Teacher repeats that they are going to introduce themselves to each other, there are new faces, one needs to know them. "On a compris?" "Vous avez compris?" ('Is it understood? Have you understood?') Teacher leaves again to fetch a sponge to wipe the blackboard.

08:18

They start on the presentations. "Who knows the teacher's name?" Teacher chooses one girl, she answers correctly. She gets a piece of chalk as reward. He asks the name of the school director (himself). Lambert answers correctly, he also gets a reward. Two children, one girl and one boy (Iya) don't understand French at all. The teacher tries to get the boy to understand what he wants him to do: to say his name with a loud voice while standing up. He points to himself: 'My name is Joey,' he names the children who have already introduced themselves, but the boy doesn't seem to understand a thing. The whole class laughs a bit.

What we see here is that in his very first encounter with a new SIL-class, the teacher directly launches into some core activities in 'doing school'. He expects the children to stand up when told so, to present themselves in French, to propose French school songs when asked to do so, and to sing them. If this was a class in France, with all children fluent in French, we should perhaps not be surprised. They could be expected to simply understand his orders and comply with them. But the children in this area do not generally understand much French, something we can also see in the excerpt. Joey is aware of this problem, and uses such strategies as repeating things, checking for understanding, and using gestures to clarify his communicative intent. Still he gives his orders and expects them to be followed. He can confidently do this: he knows that there are redoers in class and what their capacities are, since they were taught by him last school year. And it worked: everybody got to their feet, somebody came up with a song, and they sung it. The newcomers did not sing much, but they stood, watched and listened to the performance of the more competent participants. In other words, they participated at their present level of competence. The zone of peripheral participation was already at work.

Joey also barges right into the most common interactional pattern in Cameroonian classrooms: he asks questions to elicit information for the class to hear. We have already mentioned the importance of teacher questions in 7.2.2 on page 249. For the present purpose, let us just note that he at first picks out children who know the answers to his questions. He achieves three things by getting correct answers right away: knowledge is presented in class as coming from the students themselves, he shames those who did not know by showing them that their peers know, and he presents the reward system for being an active

student. Joey establishes himself as a gift-giver, someone it pays off to please.

A little later, in the presentation sequence, he tries to get everyone to participate, not only the knowledgeable redoers. Participation at some level in verbal classroom activities is another core practice of 'doing school', and something the students should be acquainted with right away. As is usual in peripheral participation activities, he does try to simplify the task for Iya, who is quite lost linguistically and seems to have no notion of how to present himself the school way. But it is without success in this case, Iya does not even try to imitate what Joey is doing. The others laugh, from their viewpoint of competent members they do not want to let Iya get away with his total lack of participation: he is held accountable to the group for his actions. The negative side of the school reward system is thus revealed as well: lack of competence invites ridicule.

### **Traits at work**

From the point of view of community of practice traits, nr. 4 'Absence of introductory preambles' is rather clearly present here. Joey also demonstrates nr. 7 'Knowing what others know, what they can do and how they can contribute to an enterprise.' The redoers in class show the ability to assess the appropriateness of actions, nr. 9, as they laugh at Iya's lack of competence in participation in the presentation routine. The fact that such traits are already operating in a class the very first day at school shows that a community of practice is already developed in this class, with a group of core members carrying over their competence from last year. A substantial group of newcomers is also present and need the training in 'doing school' given by the teacher's use of redoers' competence and participation exercises.

The most fundamental trait at work, though, is most closely identified as nr. 10, 'Specific tools, representations and artefacts' and concerns the use of French in the classroom. All the interaction here is carried out in French, the only fully legitimate communication channel of this community of practice. As all school knowledge is represented in French, and almost everything falling under the label of 'doing school' is mediated in French, the French language is a crucial tool of the class community of practice. For the students to master this tool is a probably the closest one can get to an explicit 'joint enterprise' of all participants in any school-related community of practice, parents included.

### 7.2.4 First day at school in Mipom

A transcription excerpt<sup>11</sup> from the very first day of school at the small village school of Mipom also gives a further idea of how redoers normally are used in class.

The class in the little village school of Mipom consisted of some complete newcomers and some redoers in SIL, and a CP-class of which only a few had actually passed the tests for entering CP. It is possible that some of the students had been studying on CP-level before, as well, so that there were CP redoers. Many of the students were quite old, nine to sixteen or seventeen years, many of these were in CP, while the SIL students were about half and half six to seven years and eight to nine years.<sup>12</sup> Their former teacher had not had any professional teacher training and they had not completed last school year.

In any case, the new teacher, formally trained, chooses to start working with the CP class by holding up the CP French reader and ask questions about the persons seen in the main picture of the two pages of lesson 1. This is a very common way of presenting materials to be learned in class. Teachers seek to construct simple texts by asking questions of the class. The elicited text is then used as a basis for new rounds of questions and other exercises. But the idea of having the students express themselves instead of the teacher giving them information leads teachers to elicit the information from the students themselves, by having them observe and make inferences about the features of the materials, a laborious process in many cases.

In this case the main picture showed two foregrounded students in front of other students and a school building, while the lower part of the page and the next page show isolated pictures of other objects connected with the main picture only by virtue of containing the vowels **i** and **u**, **a** and **o**. In the turns before the excerpt below, the teacher first asked questions of what the students saw. He had answers pointing out the pipe (*pipe*) and the bike (*vélo*), while he steadily was driving at eliciting that the picture shows students in front of a school. Best tries at the start of our excerpt have been ‘people’ and ‘a house’. Finally a teenage girl offers ‘a school’ in turn (24), and gets an applause as reward. We start from turn (17) on the next page:

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<sup>11</sup>Irrelevant turns are skipped and marked with a triple —; numbering of turns skips as well.

<sup>12</sup>Informal estimations of age only, except for a group of about 10 students where I had access to explicit age data.

**Transcript 7.2** *SIL & CP, Mipom, 3 October 2005.**Original:**English translation:*

- (17) **Teacher:** 06.37.0 C'est uun-e [1.0] écol-e. [0.5] Bien. [0.6] Eeet-  
(*indicates two foregrounded persons*)  
[0.5] les gens là, [0.6] hein? Quel-  
Tout de suite quelqu'un a dit qu'il y  
a les gens. [1.0] C'est les qui ici, c'est  
les qui ici? (*to Iila*) Oui? [0.8]
- (18) **Iila:** 06.46.5 Les élèves.
- (19) **Teacher:** 06.47.5 Très! bien, ap-  
plaudissez fort aussi pour lui!
- (20) **Class:** 06.48.9 (*somewhat scattered*)  
(*clap – clap – clap-clap-clap – clap*)
- — — Teacher continues in turns 21–23 by asking where the students are,  
little response from the class. Then:
- (24) **Salimatou:** 07.02.8 (*stands up, very low voice*) Ils sont à l'école. (*sits down*)
- (25) **Teacher:** 07.04.4 Très bien, applaud-  
issez aussi pour elle,
- (26) **Class:** 07.05.7 (*clap – clap – clap-clap-clap – clap*)
- (17) **Teacher:** 06.37.0 It is aaa- [1.0] school-e. [0.5] Good. [0.6] Aaand-  
(*indicates two foregrounded persons*)  
[0.5] those persons, [0.6] hm? What-  
Just now somebody said that there are  
persons. [1.0] It is who here, it is who  
here? (*to Iila*) Yes? [0.8]
- (18) **Iila:** 06.46.5 The students.
- (19) **Teacher:** 06.47.5 Veery! good, big  
applause for him as well!
- (20) **Class:** 06.48.9 (*somewhat scattered*)  
(*clap – clap – clap-clap-clap – clap*)
- (24) **Salimatou:** 07.02.8 (*stands up, very low voice*) They are at school. (*sits down*)
- (25) **Teacher:** 07.04.4 Veery good, ap-  
plaud for her as well,
- (26) **Class:** 07.05.7 (*clap – clap – clap-clap-clap – clap*)

So far the information elicited is generally inferable from the picture, and not too difficult to express even with only little knowledge of French. He also encourages his new class by ordering an applause for a good answer in turn (19). The students comply and applaud Iila, though somewhat scattered. But now the teacher enters into more specific details still asking questions. Significantly, he ties ability of answering to being intelligent, squarely placing the responsibility of knowing on the student's side.



Figure 7.1: Sometimes things happen behind the teacher's back. From February in the Mipom school

### Transcript 7.3 *SIL & CP, Mipom, 3 October 2005, cont.*

#### *Original:*

- (27) **Teacher:** 07.07.6 Ils sont ààà [0.2] l'éécool-e, c'est bien. Qui peut me donner le nom de ses élèves là? Il y a combien des élèves? Je vois que- [0.6] il y a (*indicates background figures*) [1.5] beaucoup des élèves, mais les deux (*indicates foreground figures again*) [0.7] ici là, qui peut me donner les noms de ses deux ici là, de ces deux enfants ici là, deux élèves. [1.4] (*high pitch*) Donnez! [1.2] Celui qui est intelligent peut trouver, les noms de ces deux enfants là.[0.7]

#### *English translation:*

- (27) **Teacher:** 07.07.6 They are aaat [0.2] schoo-ol, that's right. Who can give me the name of those students there? How many students are there? I see that- [0.6] there are (*indicates background figures*) [1.5] many students, but the two (*indicates foreground figures again*) [0.7] here, who can give me the name of these two here, of these two children here, two students. [1.4] (*high pitch*) Give! [1.2] He who is intelligent can find it out, the names of those two children. [0.7]

The teacher now seems slightly exasperated with the lack of knowledge and response in the class. He then appeals directly to *les redoublants*, and gets some responses:

**Transcript 7.4** *SIL & CP, Mipom, 3 October 2005, cont.**Original:*

- (28) **Teacher:** 07.31.6 (*to somebody*) Oui. [1.2] C'est qui et qui? [2.8] Qui peut donner les noms de ces deux enfants? (*beat in air with right hand, harsher voice*) Les redoublants? [0.7] Hein? [0.8] (*new beat, end in open hand*) Vous ne connaissez pas? [1.8] (*insistently*) Levez les doigts, pour répondre on doit lever les doigts. (*Salimatou fidgets and minimally lifts her hand*) [1.5] (*to Salimatou*) Oui. [1.4]
- (29) **Salimatou:** 07.48.8 (*small giggle, stands up, low voice*) Ali et Alima [0.4]
- (30) **Teacher:** 07.50.7 Ali? [1.0] Oui Ali, (*she starts sitting down*) et l'autre c'est qui.
- (31) **Salimatou:** 07.53.7 (*she straightens up again, low voice*) Alima.
- (32) **Teacher:** 07.55.2 Ce n'est pas Alima. (*Salimatou sits down*) [3.2] Y a Ali, oui, [0.4] l'autre c'est qui?
- (33) **Student:** 08.01.4 (*lifts finger, gets acknowledged by teacher, very low voice*) C'est Talo.
- (34) **Teacher:** 08.02.3 Nh-nh. Pas Talo. [0.8] L'autre c'eeeest- [1.8] Y a Ali, c'est le garçon, [0.3] la fille là, son nom c'est qui? (*to a boy in back*) Oui, mon ami?
- (35) **Student:** 08.10.2 (*stands*) Aïssa [1.0]
- (36) **Teacher:** 08.11.3 Ce n'est pas Aïssa. C'eeeest [1.4] (*low pitch*) Faaa- [0.5] (*normal pitch. Some students murmur along with him:*) -ti. Les redoublants, vous avez tout oublié?

*English translation:*

- (28) **Teacher:** 07.31.6 (*to somebody*) Yes. [1.2] It is who and who? [2.8] Who can give the names of these two children? (*beat in air with right hand, harsher voice*) The redoers? [0.7] Hm? [0.8] (*new beat, end in open hand*) You don't know? [1.8] (*insistently*) Raise your fingers, to answer one should raise one's finger. (*Salimatou fidgets and minimally lifts her hand*) [1.5] (*to Salimatou*) Yes. [1.4]
- (29) **Salimatou:** 07.48.8 (*small giggle, stands up, low voice*) Ali and Alima [0.4]
- (30) **Teacher:** 07.50.7 Ali? [1.0] Yes Ali, (*she starts sitting down*) and the other one, who's that.
- (31) **Salimatou:** 07.53.7 (*she straightens up again, low voice*) Alima.
- (32) **Teacher:** 07.55.2 It isn't Alima. (*Salimatou sits down*) [3.2] It is Ali, yes, [0.4] who is the other one? [0.4]
- (33) **Student:** 08.01.4 (*lifts finger, gets acknowledged by teacher, very low voice*) It is Talo.
- (34) **Teacher:** 08.02.3 Nh-nh. Not Talo. [0.8] The other one, it iiiiiis- [1.8] Ali is there, that is the boy, [0.3] the girl, what is her name? (*to a boy in back*) Yes, my friend?
- (35) **Student:** 08.10.2 (*stands*) Aïssa [1.0]
- (36) **Teacher:** 08.11.3 It isn't Aïssa. It iiis [1.4] (*low pitch*) Faaa- [0.5] (*normal pitch. Some students murmur along with him:*) -ti. The redoers, have you forgotten everything?



## 7.2. ESTABLISHING PRACTICE

### *Original:*

- (37) **Severall:** 08.16.6 (*scattered low voices, a shamefaced smile, backs bowing*) Aa-a. Fati. (*murmurs of Fati*)

### *English translation:*

- (37) **Severall:** 08.16.6 (*scattered low voices, a shamefaced smile, backs bowing*) Aa-a. Fati. (*murmurs of Fati*)

To the last the teacher hopes for somebody to come up with the right answer, as in turn (34) when he says ‘The other one, it iiiiiis-’ and then leaves a nearly 2 second long slot for the class to fill in. When they fail to do so, he rephrases the question and try again, only to get another answer well off the mark. In turn (36), the teacher gives in and actually says the name of the person, again with a pause in the middle to accomodate anyone who might want to fill in the last syllable, and finally there are a few voices who murmur the last part of the name together with him: it seems they have heard it before, after all. The teacher then berates ‘the redoers’ for having forgotten everything, and the students seem suitably shamed, making an ‘understanding at last’ sound and small whispers of the name to each other.

In the following turns, the teacher repeats the important information gleaned from the preceding turns and assembles a small text line to be learned by the class. He uses a cut off–complete technique in turn (40) to check for its uptake in class.

### **Transcript 7.5** *SIL & CP, Mipom, 3 October 2005.*

#### *Original:*

- (38) **Teacher:** 08.18.2 Hein? (*Class:Fati*) [0.8] Ali eeet (*Class:Fati*) [0.7] Faaa-ti. Ils sont où? [1.1] (*small talk in class*) Ils sont où? À la maison?
- (39) **Severall:** 08.25.8 (*scattered, some are lifting fingers but not waiting for turn allocation*) Ils sont à l’école=école.
- (40) **Teacher:** 08.27.1 Ils sont à l’é- on lève le doigt. [0.7] On ne repond pas globalement comme ça, on lève leee doigt pour repondre. Ils sont ààà- [0.5]
- (41) **Class:** 08.34.7 -l’école
- (42) **Teacher:** 08.35.5 (*slightly overlapping*) Ils sont à l’écol-e. Bien!

#### *English translation:*

- (38) **Teacher:** 08.18.2 Hmh? (*Class:Fati*) [0.8] Ali aaand (*Class:Fati*) [0.7] Faaa-ti. Where are they ? [1.1] (*small talk in class*) Where are they? At home?
- (39) **Severall:** 08.25.8 (*scattered, some are lifting fingers but not waiting for turn allocation*) They are at school=school.
- (40) **Teacher:** 08.27.1 They are at sch- you lift your hand. [0.7] You don’t answer all together like that, you should lift your hand to answer. They are aaat- [0.5]
- (41) **Class:** 08.34.7 -school.
- (42) **Teacher:** 08.35.5 (*slightly overlapping*) They are at school. Good!

**Traits at work**

Again it is interesting to look at the interaction in Transcript 7.2 to 7.5 from a ‘redoers and community of practice’ perspective. The community of practice of this class and their teacher is not fully developed in any way. The teacher is new in class and does not as yet know the range of competence of the students. He tries to appeal directly to the supposed group of redoers for the information he wants put to the class, but with small success, though he still holds them accountable for their lacking performance. On the other hand, he treats the students as legitimate peripheral participants by being encouraging and lenient in his treatment of wrong answers, such as the proposal of pipe and bike before the first transcription excerpt above. Rather, he tries to simplify their task by covering the irrelevant parts of the page. He repeats and rephrases questions, multiplying answering slots. He also tells them straightforwardly how to do things, like lifting your hand. When somebody comes up with correct answers, he endorses them, often by calling an applause, and expands single words to more complete sentences, creating texts to learn.

On some more basic levels, the class shows some ‘doing school’ competence: most stand up to give their answers when asked about something, they often, though not always, remember to lift their hand to get a turn, they can do the Bravo! clapping pattern, and they are somewhat used to repeating modeled phrases in unison (later in the same session). Interestingly, there are more interactions between students in this group than often is the case in more experienced classes: they are not yet broken into the participation structure of ‘doing school’ which outlaws student-student interaction and ratifies only student-teacher interaction as the only legitimate interaction in class, see 7.3.1 on the next page. The general impression is of a group with as yet little more than basic knowledge of many common school practices and certainly not of a developed community of practice ‘doing school’ together. But participation in ‘doing school’ has started, and as the months passed, this class did achieve a more coherent practice.

### **7.3 Reifications of ‘doing school’ in the practice of the classroom**

The negotiation of meaning in a community of practice happens in the convergence of processes of participation and processes of reification (Wenger 1998, 55). In the description of the classroom enterprise of ‘doing school’, I shall bring in two kinds of non-verbal reification which are part of its practice: *classroom layout* and *body idiom*. The two hang closely together, as the classroom layout sets the stage for the acting out of body idiom. They are non-verbal as such,

but enter into spoken interaction both by being sometimes inseparately connected to verbal practices and by being talked about. They are treated in 7.3.1, while commented transcription excerpts in 7.3.2 give examples of their appearance in the practice of ‘doing school’.

The concept of body idiom was originally coined by Goffman (1963). In his work he describes it as including “bodily appearance and personal acts: dress, bearing, movement and position, sound level, physical gestures such as waving or saluting, facial decorations, and broad emotional expression” (Goffman 1963, 33), cited in Scollon (2003, 90). All of these aspects of body idiom are to some degree involved in the practice of ‘doing school’ in Cameroon.

#### 7.3.1 Classroom layout and the platform format

As mentioned in 6.3.2, the typical layout of a classroom has all the students facing the blackboard and the teacher, with his desk placed on a low dais up front. An insight-giving notion for treating this physical setup is the *platform format* (Scollon 2003). This ‘panopticon’ layout is a time-honoured European way to structure a classroom (Scollon 2003, 94). Its main idea is that every student shall have visual access to the teacher and vice versa. It presupposes the importance of the teacher’s words and actions in the learning process, and has little regard for sideways interaction in the class.

In class, then, the teacher is usually up front in class, on the ‘podium’ as it were, taking occasional strolls down the rows to show the students a textbook picture or to control seatwork assigned to them. He may also make forays into class to physically correct a student occupied with illegitimate things; that means anything that the student is paying attention to instead of looking at teacher-ratified activity. From his little platform, the teacher constantly monitors the class, managing turn allocations and arranging and supervising role plays. From time to time he turns his attention away to writing on the blackboard or looking in books on his desk, but he usually keeps up an auditive monitoring, using verbal control to check any illegitimate activity in class, and gives them visual attention if the disturbance gets too bad.

The layout plays up to the monofocal *platform format* (Scollon 2003, 91). Scollon defines it as “the arrangement of an activity set before an audience whose obligation is to appreciate but not actively participate.” There is a hierarchical ordering so that the person on the platform is the focal point of everybody else, while he himself is free to let his gaze rove over the audience. A performer in other settings is usually held accountable for the competence of his performance (Bauman 1977, 11), but the hierarchical relations in a Cameroonian classroom turn the tables completely. The students are rather at all points held accountable for their watching part, while the performance of the teacher can only be

applauded and never negatively evaluated by the class.

The full concentration of the audience on the platform performance certainly holds true for classrooms in Cameroon: the teacher demands complete attention from the students. If teaching is unsuccessful, responsibility is turned back on the students: they have not followed, they have been lazy, they are not intelligent. Such demands of *attention-from-beneath* is common in formal educational settings of many types in modern Western schooling: those without formal power and authority in the school setting must pay very close attention to the doings, verbally and otherwise, of their superordinates, risking institutionalised sanctions if they are deemed to fail in attention. The same demand is not made of teachers or other superordinates (Erickson 2004, 182). There is interactional participation beyond paying attention from the audience in the classroom, but this is completely controlled by the teacher. This observation connects to another aspect of the platform format highlighted by Scollon (2003): it is monologic. The idea may seem odd when one observes a class in lively interaction with their teacher, as we shall do in later sections of this chapter, but a closer analysis shows that the surface dialogue is designed to produce predefined texts, and has a rigid participation structure which makes it difficult to see as a real dialogue. I have already mentioned the fact that students never seem to ask the teacher for information, see 7.2.2 on page 249. Scollon (2003, 93) sees true conversation as something of an impossibility in settings defined by a platform format:

“The performance of the platform speaker simulates a conversational encounter in which each ratified participant is presumed to have an equal right to speak, although in fact the speaker delivers a monolog or simulates a dialog and the audience is expected not to engage in conversation with those in their immediate circle, but rather to devote their attention to the speaker on the platform. In other words, all participants in the platform format fictionalize a conversation between performer and individual members of the audience.”

— Scollon (2003, 93)

The platform format used in educational settings generally sets up a participation structure where the turns of speech must be sequential, while overlapping turns are felt to be interruptions (Erickson 2004, 55;151–2). In such a setup the teacher has an important ordering function, and he fully controls the speech rights in the class, having exclusive rights for himself and power to allocate turns to the students. This holds true of Cameroonian classrooms as well: there are almost no legitimate situations in class where the student spontaneously can have a turn, they must always be allowed to speak first by the teacher. There are three exceptions: the first is to ask for permission to go to the toilet, but this is not public interaction,

### 7.3. REIFICATIONS OF PRACTICE

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the student quietly asks the teacher and goes out. The second is the posing of a question to the class at large, or leaving a word or a sentence to hang unfinished. These occasions are for choral responses rather than for individuals, though if the item brought up for answer or completion is less well-known in class, individual voices will be heard. The third is the interval between the asking of a question and the allocation of a turn to some student: it creates a window in the normal sequential procedure of class business where everybody is allowed to volunteer for the next turn, and where many do so not only by quietly lifting their hands, but also by shouting 'Moi, monsieur!', half-rising from their desks, snapping their fingers or making other gestures to attract the attention of the teacher, making these moments quite rowdy at times. If it goes too far, the teacher will try to calm them down, for example by explicitly choosing someone for the next turn who has not made a lot of noise to get it, but often teachers allow these moments of overlapping and boisterous activity in the class, saying that it shows an eagerness to participate.

Even in these situations, the teacher is the focal point of all activity. The only legitimate alternatives are those students he allocates a speech turn to, the slates or notebooks of the students when they are assigned work to do, or the blackboard when the teacher draws their attention to it. The extreme focus on the teacher seen in Cameroonian classrooms is reified in the layout, and the platform format has direct impact both on how bodies are oriented and configured in the classroom, and the verbal interaction in class. It also has a strong impact on the interaction patterns of the class; this will be more thoroughly treated in 7.3.2, after looking at classroom layout and body idiom in the present section.

Actually, I was taken in by the platform format as well: during my first period of field work, I first sat in the back of classes, partly to avoid disturbing as much as possible, of course, but also because it felt as the best vantage point for seeing the important action going on. It was not till I started looking at my videos that I saw that I had been fooled by the platform format: I had taken the teacher's activities up front to be THE activity of the class, missing the interactional relations between teacher and class, and between students in class. My focus was thus changed through my participant observation.

#### **Classroom modes of body idiom**

There are different modes of body idiom with different uses in the practice of 'doing school'. To participate competently both the students and the teacher have to know their meanings: they are reifications of power structures that are played out in the platform layout of the classroom.

The default mode of body idiom in the classroom is sitting, more specifically sitting at desks, or at least on benches, with faces oriented to the front of the

classroom and the teacher. A special form of sitting with arms crossed on the chest can be used for certain occasions of paying extra attention to the teacher. Crossing one's arms in this way is in fact a reduction of one's peri-personal space and the possibility of doing something else with one's hands. Such an act is quite likely to have a mental effect as well, as shown in recent neurolinguistic research (Gallese & Lakoff 2005). Besides moments when the teacher wants full attention from the class, it is also commonly used when the students have written some assignment on their slates and before the teacher starts giving the correct answer. In the last case the idea is to hinder students from cheating.

Variation modes to the default sitting mode are standing up, and going up to do some task in front of class. Standing up is a common feature of life in the class. It has two basic uses: to break up sessions, and to show deference to the teacher (or other adults).

Standing up as a sign of deference or respect is used both in normal class interaction between teacher and students, and as part of greeting a visitor in class. In interaction between teacher and students, standing up has a double meaning. On the one hand, it is a deferential response to the teacher's allocation of a speech turn, underscoring the difference in status. It is an acknowledgement of the turn allocated to him by his superior. The student will usually stand up when he is singled out for giving some specific response to the teacher, whether he is able to answer or not.

On the other hand, the acknowledgement of a turn allocation by standing up also has the student metaphorically 'entering the podium'. The attention and gaze orientation of the class often shift from the teacher to the student allocated a turn. The general teacher focus counteracts the focus transferral to some degree, though; other students will often continue to gaze at the teacher to get his reaction to a student's speech turn, or wait for him to repeat it out loud. In any case, the teacher's immunity to judgments of his performance is unfortunately not transferred along with the focus shift: the student is subject to all kinds of judgments from both the teacher and the other students as soon as he takes the floor. This sudden single appearance 'on the podium' is clearly strongly felt as quite an ordeal by many students who use a very low voice, wriggle and/or look down as they speak, or use an approximation of the general Nizaa respectful stance by bowing forward over the desk (see Figs. 7.2 and 7.3) on the following page. Teachers will often admonish students to speak out loud and to stand straight in such situations, with variable success. As time goes by, however, many students do acquire the desired upright position when answering questions from the teacher.

In greetings, the class often stands up spontaneously without any prompting from the teacher. Standing up is the body idiom part of the greeting accorded the teacher and other adults entering class, as seen also in the opening paragraphs

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Figure 7.2: Standing up in response to a speech turn allocation from teacher.



Figure 7.3: Bowing forward –Nizaa and school respectfulness combined.



of this chapter, where one of several verbal greetings forms were cited as well. Greetings as a speech genre are sensitive to power relations, by being a speech activity that effects “the establishment of a person’s presence and its recognition by others” (Duranti 2004, 456). In a greeting, then, the other is recognised as a potential agent whose actions can have an impact on my own being. But typically in all communities there are groups which are not routinely greeted when entering other people’s presence, such as children and servants. This is also the case in the classrooms studied here. The teacher was greeted when he came into class in the morning, and a visitor such as myself as well, while children entering the class were not greeted publicly and deferentially in this way, being from another class or not making no difference.

The different greetings accorded people of different status was also quite effectively reified in textbooks such as the SIL French reader: the very first lesson, called ‘Abena arrive à l’école’, (‘Abena arrives at school’) shows the student Abena entering the classroom. He holds his right hand to his chest, and according to the role play memorised by the students in later sessions, says: “Bonjour! Je m’appelle Abena.” (Good morning! My name is Abena.) The teacher looks at him and thus acknowledges his presence, but the students are not standing up and are not particularly looking at him. The next picture shows a smiling ‘Mr. le Directeur’ arriving in class, making no presentation gesture, with both teacher (slightly bowed) and students standing to greet him (*Champions français*: SIL 1997, 4-5). Two further pictures in the same lesson show greetings among equals: two teachers and two students, both pairs use handshaking to greet each other.

The ‘stand-up–sit-down’ event of breaks are typical interactional routines with a fixed pattern of verbal commands and verbal and bodily responses by prescribed participants. The simplest form consists of rising, sitting down and rising again, and can be extended in several directions: exercises of hand and arm movements, singing one or more songs, or simply to sit down again. The up’s and down’s effectively break up whatever activity the class is at, and in addition to planned for use by the teacher, a session of stand up–sit down can be employed to get control over unrest or lack of concentration in class. The sessions are completely controlled by the teacher. Whatever the extension, the basic meaning is a break; after such a session the class learns to expect a change in theme.

The last variation of body movements and configurations I shall note here, is student activity in front of class. It covers blackboard exercises of different kinds, and role plays with dialogues. In the case of blackboard exercises it may be to read a text out loud while pointing to each syllable with a stick, to point out certain letters, to draw a line between numbers and their corresponding names in letters and so on. Such exercises are usually individual and done with the student facing the blackboard rather than the class. A student giving a wrong answer may



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have to stay there till someone else has come up and given the right response to the question. Dialogues are much used in French lessons, and normally the class will have rehearsed them thoroughly before pairs or trios of students are called forward to do them. They will normally be oriented to each other as they are acting out their roles. Recitations of poems or rhymes are individual performances and the student faces the class.

Again the students visibly ‘enter the podium’ even more than by just standing up to answer a question. Their participation on this level of ‘doing school’ must also display a certain level of competence, since they are held accountable to the group for their performance. The teacher normally selects students for ‘up front performances’ from those who volunteer for it, and usually does not pick out students who are clearly too incompetent to carry out the practice in question. The main object of the students volunteering to go forward on such occasions seems to be to please the teacher rather than the class. The teacher, on the other hand, will often enlist the class in his evaluation of their efforts, commonly lancing the question ‘*Est-ce qu’il/elle l’a trouvé?*’ (Has he/she found it?) or ‘*Est-ce que c’est ça?*’ (Is that it?) when the student has delivered an answer to the problem in question. These questions in themselves are taken as indications that the given answer is wrong and usually lead to a flood of the students lifting hands and calling out ‘Moi, monsieur!’ (Me, teacher!) to have a go at the question themselves.

#### **Dress and cleanliness**

What to wear is an important part of body idiom. Cameroonian primary school children do not wear school uniforms on an everyday basis, at least not in the Adamaoua province, but there are certain standards of dressing and personal appearance that they must adhere to. There is little teacher attention and critique of clothing as such, as long as the students have reasonably decent and (if possible) clean clothes. On the other hand they are explicitly told to be clean and to always wear shoes to school. They may be scolded in class for not having shoes or for taking them off during class. Lack of cleanliness is a less common subject of public chastisement, though cleanliness is certainly talked about as an ideal.

Many school children carefully wash their feet before going off to school. This is part of a general Cameroonian or maybe Northern Cameroonian standard of clean feet and shoes as an important aspect of acceptable personal appearance, more or less shared by both villagers and educated persons. The school emphasis on personal cleanliness as a virtue seems here to join with the daily Moslem ritual washings at prayer times to create a concern with clean feet.

Particular attention is also paid to headwear. Girls are not supposed to wear

head scarves in class, they should have well-braided hair instead.<sup>13</sup> This rule was quite strictly enforced at some schools (e.g. Group 2, the ‘School of the Nizaa’ in Galim), while other teachers were more lax (e.g. Group 3, ‘School of the Koole’, and some of the smaller village schools). The general rule of the area is for women and girls to cover their heads in all public arenas, even down to covering their heads if a male visitor enters the more private sphere of the compound. This applies to both Moslems and Christian families, who tend to see uncovered female heads as unseemly, though Christians seemed to be less moralistic about it. The forced baring of the head in school is thus in direct opposition to general village behaviour. The head scarf is a ‘boundary object’ (Wenger 1998), meaning decency and correct female attitudes in the village, but taking on a different meaning in school, where it is rather seen as an unwelcome tie to the recalcitrant attitudes of uneducated villagers, or simply as ‘unschoolish’.<sup>14</sup> Boys do not have a similar problem: they should have close-cropped hair or shaven heads in school, which is the accepted norm also in the village.

The patterns of personal appearance also extend to the teachers. Of the about forty teachers in the Galim-Tignère area, only three were female. Two of these teachers worked in the kindergarten in Galim, and for work both seemed to prefer the common three-piece wrapper outfit of the area, head scarf and all. The last female teacher seemed to prefer more modern style clothing with knee-length skirts and blouses for work. Most of the male teachers would wear modern style clothing, typically shirts and trousers, but they did not often put on a tie or other symbols of formality. Some would wear African-style shirts, but the traditional male grand outfit (*gandoura*) was not used on an everyday basis.<sup>15</sup> All teachers I observed appeared clean and well-groomed, and usually with closed shoes and socks, not sandals, which means another notch up the scale of clean feet.

‘Doing school’ includes these concrete expressions of what is within bounds of a proper personal appearance in school. As classroom modes of body idiom they are reifications of the community of practice of the classes.

### School celebrations as identity resource

All of these rules and expectations of personal appearance in school are brought into sharp relief on the annual festive celebrations of the school. The *Fête de la*

<sup>13</sup>Braids are also an important part of female body idiom; for example, at the start of the mourning period after the death of her husband, the widow’s braids are undone. At the end of the period she is again ritually braided. The custom exists in many ethnic groups.

<sup>14</sup>Headscarves in Cameroon are not generally considered backwards or unmodern, though, they are a very common piece of clothing for Cameroonian women in all situations and walks of life, and top off any stylish wrapper outfit.

<sup>15</sup>I saw this kind of clothing only once in class, when a teacher came directly to work from an interview with a superior.

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*Jeunesse* on the 11th of February and the National day on the 20th of May are both grand occasions with parades and performances of the school children on the open plaza in front of the *chefferie*. In Galim they were watched by the *souspréfet* with entourage as State representatives, the chief with his *notables* and other local dignitaries,<sup>16</sup> and usually a substantial part of the village population. In smaller villages, the jawro presides over the ceremonies with such local civil servants and dignitaries as the village may have.

On these occasions, the children wear school uniforms. Both sexes have short sleeve shirts, but while the boys wear shorts, the girls put on below-the-knee skirts. No head scarf is seen, only newly braided hair, maybe with colourful beads or other ornaments worked in. Most boys have been shaved or have cut their hair for the occasion. Teachers wear their best as well. The overall effect is an image of modern Cameroon, in clashing contrast with the onlookers in more traditional clothing, especially striking in the case of the children onlookers.

The students do a parade through the village, and end up performing *des mouvements* on the main plaza. Dances and drill movements form a spectacle for the onlookers, the more complicated the better. Individual performances of recitations, singing, doing a dance or drill also receive much applause if well done. If the audience is particularly pleased with the performance, a teacher will often receive a token of appreciation in the form of money stuck on to his forehead as he is leading the drills. In the case of parent-paid teachers, it may be the closest they get to a salary, as it is notoriously difficult to get a regular salary in these posts. Even with a publicly paid teacher, such gestures may be a very welcome token of appreciation from the population. Consequently, quite a bit of effort is put into making a good show. For several weeks before the celebration the classes are taken out to exercise on a field, they rehearse drills and songs in the classroom, and generally expend quite a lot of time and energy on the celebration preparation.

The annual school celebrations serves as important boundary encounters between the village and the school community. In their everyday existence, ordinary villagers do not get much insight into life at school, and have little possibility to know what their children are engaged in there. By bringing the students out into the streets and having them perform pleasing drills and parades for the villagers, teachers achieve an acknowledgement for the school project, a sort of PR which may have more parents send off their children to school, apart from the direct benefit of gifts. At the same time, it is clearly felt that the school identity should be as clearly marked as possible, by means of the school uniforms and the school standards of head dress.

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<sup>16</sup>Such as resident missionaries, or linguists on field work; I have attended these celebrations in both capacities.

### 7.3.2 Talking about body idiom in the classroom

In looking at such largely non-verbal reifications as classroom layout and body idiom, we should keep in mind that meaning is always negotiated in the coming together of reification and participation. Practice contains both processes, and is, furthermore, as a whole mediated and produced through linguistic interaction. Verbal interaction in itself contains both reificative and participatory aspects. I will conclude this section with transcripts of some classroom interaction situations, where the non-verbal reifications treated in the preceding sections are visible. Non-verbal reifications comes together with talk. That talk is not only about, but produce, the reifications, in the total practice of ‘doing school’.

#### Good and bad in a Galim class

The first example is from a morning session in the CP-class of Group 2 in Galim just a week after start of term. Some of the themes treated in 7.3.1 and 7.3.1 were both talked about and demonstrated. The redoers in this class had completed SIL (possibly more than once, of course) and been through CP at least once with the same teacher. In my analyses I look at how the themes of dress, cleanliness and body idiom crop up in the everyday business of ‘doing school’, though other themes are also present.

In the situation transcribed below 47 students were present, varying between 7–9 years for the majority, and up to 11 or 12 years for a smaller group. I was observing and taping from the back of class.

The transcription is divided into four excerpts with comments. The first excerpt 7.6 is a greeting sequence, and the greetings are done in English. The second excerpt 7.7 on the facing page has the teacher talking about cleanliness and headwear in class. Transcript 7.8 on page 272 has a standup-sit down-session used as a break. Transcript 7.9 on page 274 gives examples of speech turn allocations.

**Transcript 7.6** *CP, Gr.2 Galim, 16 September 2005.*

- (1) **Class:** *(Class has just stood up)* Good morning, Madam!
- (2) **bk:** 00.00.1 *(entering class)* Good morning, class.
- (3) **Class:** 00.03.5 *(class standing, looking curiously at bk)*
- (4) **Teacher:** 00.04.6 *(coming in right behind bk)* Sit down! [0.5] *(class starts to sit down while looking at bk walking to back of class)* 5.2
- (5) **Class:** 00.05.7 *(sit down as they speak)* I am sitting down.

Turns (1–5) represent a deference showing use of the standing up-routine which changes to the stand-up – sit-down routine. The teacher ends the sequence above

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by telling the class to sit down, still in English, and they answer him by saying ‘I am sitting down’ as they sit down. The teacher thus goes from the speech genre of greetings over to the more general interactional routine of stand up –sit down.

Such small interactional routines globally learned and connected with body activities are a staple part of language instruction in both French and English in SIL and for English also in later grades. Later that morning the class had a twenty minute English lesson introduced by a sequence of standing up–sitting down with English commands, a song in English using body movements and naming body parts, and then a session of training on greetings in English, before they sung another two songs.

#### Transcript 7.7 CP, Gr.2, Galim, 16-09-2005 cont.

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(6)</p> <p>a. <b>Teacher:</b> 00.09.0 (<i>stands in front of desk and points to it while speaking</i>) Est-ce que la place de maître est déjà nettoyée! [0.5] J’ai dit comment aux filles ici! [1.5] (<i>heads turn to front; Asta comes forward with a scarf in her hand, teacher says to her:</i>) Oui. (<i>still pointing at desk</i>) [0.8] (<i>to the class</i>) Qu’est-ce que j’ai dit aux filles? [0.6] (<i>to Asta</i>) Rapidement, là. (<i>she wipes off the teacher’s chair:</i>)</p> <p>b. (<i>a girl with head scarf crosses front of class on her way to her desk, teacher tells her</i>) Enlèves le foulard! (<i>teacher watches Asta till she has finished, then enters dais, puts down keys and turns to class</i>)</p> | <p>(6)</p> <p>a. <b>Teacher:</b> 00.09.0 (<i>stands in front of desk and points to it while speaking</i>) Is the teacher’s place already cleaned! [0.5] I have said what to the girls here! [1.5] (<i>heads turn to front; Asta comes forward with a scarf in her hand, teacher says to her:</i>) Yes. (<i>still pointing at desk</i>) [0.8] (<i>to the class</i>) What did I say to the girls? [0.67] (<i>to Asta</i>) Quickly there. (<i>she wipes off the teacher’s chair:</i>)</p> <p>b. (<i>a girl with head scarf crosses front of class on her way to her desk, teacher tells her</i>) Take off the headscarf! (<i>teacher watches Asta till she has finished, then enters dais, puts down keys and turns to class</i>)</p> |
|--|--|

Each Friday morning after ten it is *le grand ménage* at school, where the students participate in cleaning their school. Everybody will pitch in to sweep out and wash classrooms floor, clear shrubbery and grass from the school yard, and pick up and throw away rubbish. Washing in Group 2 was done mostly by older girls, hoeing outside mostly by the boys, and both groups worked with a will. Teachers supervised and directed, to the extent this was necessary. This weekly cleaning was an economical way of keeping the schools in an appropriate state, while supposedly teaching the students to take responsibility for their own school.

In turn (6) another aspect of cleanliness standards is at stake. Most classrooms in the Galim area schools are notoriously dusty, as they have only open lattice windows, and so dusting off the teacher's desk is more of a daily task, to take care of the teacher's personal appearance. The teacher of the CP class has no qualms about demanding this work done for him by the girls in the class. To have the students clean his place emphasises both the good example of concern with personal cleanliness and the teacher's power over the students. He demands respectfulness and gets it.

Also in turn (6) he spots a girl entering the class with headscarf, she is immediately told to take it off. This theme comes up again in turn (10g) below, when another girl starts covering her head with a large piece of cloth. She is immediately and sharply told off. Curiously, a girl in the back of class had her headscarf on all day without the teacher saying anything about it. Otherwise this particular teacher was very strict with such things as headwear, clean clothes, and wearing shoes in class, but he seemed to have given up on this girl, also in making her carry out other orders. When I asked, he remarked that "Même je dis comment, elle ne fait rien." — 'Whatever I say, she doesn't do a thing'.

In transcript 7.8 the teacher starts the day's work by making the class stand up and sit down again twice, and finally to go through a series of small exercises in 10b– 10f.

**Transcript 7.8** *CP, Gr.2, Galim, 16-09-2005 cont.*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (6)  | (6)  |
| c. 00.30.53 Debout! ( <i>strolls over the dais looking out the window</i> )                        | c. 00.30.53 Stand up! ( <i>strolls over the dais looking out the window</i> )                            |
| (7) <b>Class:</b> 00.31.4 ( <i>few and low voices</i> ) Je me lève. ( <i>everybody stands up</i> ) | (7) <b>Class:</b> 00.31.4 ( <i>few and low voices</i> ) I am standing up. ( <i>everybody stands up</i> ) |
| (8) <b>Teacher:</b> 00.32.7 Assis!   | (8) <b>Teacher:</b> 00.32.7 Sit down!  |
| (9) <b>Class:</b> 00.33.3 ( <i>very few</i> ) Je m'asxx. ( <i>class sits down</i> )                | (9) <b>Class:</b> 00.33.3 ( <i>very few</i> ) I am sitting xxx. ( <i>class sits down</i> )               |
| (10)   | (10)   |
| a. <b>Teacher:</b> 00.34.0 Debout! ( <i>class stands again</i> )                                   | a. <b>Teacher:</b> 00.34.0 Stand up! ( <i>class stands again</i> )                                       |

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<i>Original:</i>	<i>English translation:</i>
<p>(10)</p> <p>b. 00.35.4 Prends l'aire- (<i>hands are reaching into the air above their heads</i>)</p> <p>c. 00.36.2 Sur la tête (<i>hands are placed flat on the head</i>)</p> <p>d. 00.37.8 Baissez. (<i>they let fall their hands</i>)</p> <p>e. 00.39.8 Prends l'aire. (<i>hands are reaching into the air above their heads again</i>)</p> <p>f. 00.40.9 Baissez! (<i>hands fall again</i>)</p> <p>g. 00.43.4 (<i>Teacher spots a girl covering her head with a shawl</i>) Mais quoi ça! Ça c'est quoi encore? (<i>she hurriedly pulls the shawl off her head</i>) [0.67] Même Astalaamu t'a dit! (<i>having taken off the shawl, she ducks low, putting away her shawl</i>)</p>	<p>(10)</p> <p>b. 00.35.4 Grasp the air- (<i>hands are reaching into the air above their heads</i>)</p> <p>c. 00.36.2 On the head. (<i>hands are placed flat on the head</i>)</p> <p>d. 00.37.8 Lower. (<i>they let fall their hands</i>)</p> <p>e. 00.39.8 Grasp the air. (<i>hands are reaching into the air above their heads again</i>)</p> <p>f. 00.40.9 Lower! (<i>hands fall again</i>)</p> <p>g. 00.43.4 (<i>Teacher spots a girl covering her head with a shawl</i>) But what's that! What is that supposed to be? (<i>she hurriedly pulls the shawl off her head</i>) [0.67] Even Astalaamu told you! (<i>having taken off the shawl, she ducks low, putting away her shawl</i>)</p>

In turns (6b–10f) the teacher uses standing up in another way than in greetings: the movements, together with singing a song, are used as a break before he goes on to the next item of the agenda, the elicitation of today's date. This is a standard way of making a division between one session and the next. The teacher has the students stand up and sit down a couple of times, and usually do some exercises of stretching, lifting hands over the head and other small movements, or sing a song. Teachers regularly plan for and use such movement activities to break up the long class sessions of the day, as seen in preparation sheets for lessons which the teachers are required to use (Hayatou 2007). They can also use it spontaneously to break up unrest in class or if concentration is starting to die off. In SIL, the actions of standing up and sitting down outside greeting situations are always accompanied with the verbal expressions of *Je me lève*, 'I am standing up', and *Je m'assieds*, 'I am sitting down'. But in this CP-class they are already putting aside the verbal practice; the teacher from time to time told them not to say anything when rising and sitting down, though some still did.

The announcement of a song as next activity in turn (10h) gets students to vie for a turn of speaking to give a proposal.

## Transcript 7.9 CP, Gr.2, Galim, 16-09-2005 cont.

## Original:

## English translation:

- (10) h. 00.49.9 Bon! (*looks out of window while picking his teeth*) [1.1] On va on va faire un chant. (*class remains standing, girl with shawl straightens up again*)
- (10) h. 00.49.9 Good! (*looks out of window while picking his teeth*) [1.1] We shall-we shall do a song. (*class remains standing, girl with shawl straightens up again*)
- (11) **Boy of 12 y.:** 00.52.9 (*looks around, then raises his hand*)
- (11) **Boy of 12 y.:** 00.52.9 (*looks around, then raises his hand*)
- (12) **Teacher:** (*looks at him*) 00.54.8 Oui!
- (12) **Teacher:** 00.54.8 (*looks at him*) Yes!
- (13) **Boy of 12 y.:** 00.55.5 (*lets his hand fall to back of his head, turns slightly away, fidgets, embarrassed*)
- (13) **Boy of 12 y.:** 00.55.5 (*lets his hand fall to back of his head, turns slightly away, fidgets, embarrassed*)
- (14) **Teacher:** 00.57.3 (*derisively*) Regardez-moi celui-là ! (*several turn to watch the boy, girl with shawl laughs. Boy starts taking a step away from his desk, then stops as the teacher looks to right side of class*) [0.5] Oui! [0.5]
- (14) **Teacher:** 00.57.3 (*derisively*) Look at that one for me! (*several turn to watch the boy, girl with shawl laughs. Boy starts taking a step away from his desk, then stops as the teacher looks to right side of class*) [0.5] Yes! [0.5]
- (15) **Asta:** 01.00.1 (*low voice*) xx [0.7] "Une fill-e, un garçon xx"
- (15) **Asta:** 01.00.1 xx [0.7] "One girl, one boy xx"
- (16) **Boy beside her:** [01.02.7] (*lifts hand, overlaps with her turn*) Moi, monsieur!
- (16) **Boy beside her:** 01.02.7 (*lifts hand, overlaps with her turn*) Me, master!
- (17) **Teacher:** 01.05.5 Oui. "Une fille, un garçon", un, deux, trois, chants.
- (17) **Teacher:** 01.05.5 Yes. "One girl, one boy", one, two, three, sing.

The somewhat old boy lifting his hand to get a turn seems to have very little idea of what the teacher actually wants, and cannot give any answer. This is not an unusual situation in itself: frequently a student who has been eagerly vying for a turn, will dry up completely when actually getting it, having nothing to say. In these cases it seems that students take lifting one's hand and saying 'Moi, monsieur!' as something one should occasionally do in class. It was for them part of 'doing school' rather than an indication that they knew the answer to a question. Usually teachers will go easy on such students, noting the will to participate as a positive thing in it self, even though the answer is lacking. Again we can see this as an activity of the zone of legitimate peripheral participation.

In this case it is different, though: the boy ends up being publicly derided,



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in sharp contrast to other similar instances. This negative reaction is unexpected, but this boy was something of an outcast. He never seemed to please the teacher and was several times negatively made fun of in class. The teacher seemed to have given up on him, thinking him mentally lacking and useless. As we saw in 7.3.1 on page 261, the full responsibility for being knowledgeable and attentive to what is going on is put on the student. In other educational settings, the teacher would perhaps have expanded on his turn allocation to a weak student by saying for example: ‘Did you have a song to propose?’ But this student gets only a bare response of ‘Yes?’ to his bid for the floor, just like anybody else. Instead of being allowed status as a legitimate peripheral participant, he is further marginalised as a hopeless case of incompetence.

At his lack of competence at providing a song name, others are ready to go for his turn, and lift their hands. The teacher transfers his attention to them and selects Asta,<sup>17</sup> though another boy right besides her gives a final bid for a turn by saying ‘Moi, monsieur’ when she has already started her proposal.

Finally, the class sings the song proposed by Asta. Throughout the song session, the teacher is busy having three different pairs of students come up front to be ‘One girl, one boy’ who have come to dance. Again they are quite literally entering the podium, and the students picked out to do so do not seem very enthusiastic of being exposed this way. They do some token movements belonging with this song: putting their hands to their hips and doing small knee movements in beat with the song.

#### **‘The good student’ in Mipom**

The second example is from Mipom: Transcript 7.10 again concerns cleanliness at school, both in the sense of personal appearance and as cleanliness standards of the classroom.

It is Monday morning and the teacher complains in turn (1a) that the students had not done a school cleaning early in the morning, as he had told them to do on Friday.<sup>18</sup> He then changes the subject in (1b), making a connection between personal cleanliness and the ideal student. No immediate response comes forth, and in (1c) he somewhat abruptly makes a little speech about me and his interpretation of how I might perceive the class. In (1d) he goes back to his question about what a good student should do before coming to school.

#### **Transcript 7.10 *SIL & CP, Mipom, 30 January 2006.***

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<sup>17</sup>Asta had probably lifted her hand, this is not visible on the video.

<sup>18</sup>As Friday is the official school cleaning day, one would expect that the school should have been cleaned then, with the teacher supervising it. But as this teacher rather frequently took Fridays off, his admonition to sweep out the school had not been followed.

*Original:**English translation:*

(1)

(1)

- a. **Teacher:** 05.25.8 (*Students sit witha. crossed arms. Teacher, arms crossed on his back, strolls up aisle to front of class.*)  
 Cette classe, regardez que [0.4] c'est sale là. [2.9] Vous même, [1.8] (*faces class*) qu'est-ce que j'ai dit? [1.2] Hein? [0.6] J'ai diiiiit– vendredi que quoi. (*strolls down*) [2.1] Le grand matin vous venez et vous nettoyez la salle de classe, non? [0.8] Vous voyez que c'est sale là. [0.9] Hein? [4.3] (*turns, starts stroll back*)
- b. 05.48.5 Bien! [3.5] (*clears throat, turns, stops a moment as he starts speaking*)  
 Qu'est-ce qu'un bon élève doit faire, avant de venir à l'école. (*new stroll down*) [1.7] Qu'est-ce qu'un bon élève– [0.7] doit faire avant de venir à l'école? On lève le doigt. [0.7]
- c. 06.03.1 (*a number of students arec. looking absent-mindedly at me*) Vous voyez qu'elle est là (*turns, start forward*) comme ça pour-e [0.6] voir si vous travaillez. (*several look away, some embarrassed smiles*) [0.4] Hein? Si vous restez comme ça, mieux la– eh, (*turns*) elle va aller dire que, oh, les enfants là connaissent même pas– hein? [0.4] hnh? [0.4] Ils ne travaillent pas, ils ne connaissent même pas. [0.3] Depuis là? Hein? [2.7] Elle veut voir comment vous travaillez et vouuus- v- v- vous participez à la question du maître. [4.2]
- Teacher:** 05.25.8 (*Students sit with crossed arms. Teacher, arms crossed on his back, strolls up aisle to front of class.*)  
 This class, look how [0.4] it is dirty. [2.9] You yourselves, [1.8] (*faces class*) what did I say? [1.2] Hm? [0.6] I saiiiiiid– Friday that what. (*strolls down*) [2.1] Early in the morning you come and you clean out the classroom, right? [0.8] You see how dirty it is. [0.9] Hm? [4.3] (*turns, starts stroll back*)
- 05.48.5 Well! [3.5] (*clears throat, turns, stops a moment as he starts speaking*)  
 What should a good student do, before he comes to school. (*new stroll down*) [1.7] What should a good student– [0.7] do before he comes to school? One raises the hand. [0.7]
- 06.03.1 (*a number of students are looking absent-mindedly at me*) You see that she is there (*turns, start forward*) like that for-e [0.6] to see if you work. (*several look away, some embarrassed smiles*) [0.4] Hm? If you stay like that, better then– eh, (*turns*) she will go and say that, oh, those children there don't even know– hm? [0.4] hnh? [0.4] They don't work, they don't even know. [0.3] Since? Hm? [2.7] She want to see how you work and youuu- y- y- youuu participate in the teacher's question. [4.2]

*Original:*

(1)

d. 06.30.4 Qu'est-ce qu'un, [0.5] bon élève doive(\*) faire avant de venir à l'école? [0.3] N'ayez pas peur [0.3] on lève le doigt (*teacher in back of class*) [0.4] et on répond. [0.3] Si c'est faux, [0.8] on va dire (*turns, starts forward*) que ce n'est pas ça. [0.4] Oui, si c'est vrai, [0.6] (*turns to class*) on va, [1.4] applaudire, (*steps backwards facing class*) Oui, Iila. [1.2]

(2) **Iila:** 06.46.2 (*stands up*) Il doit laver les pieds, il doit brosser les dents [1.0] il lav-e les habits. [1.2] (*starts sitting down*) avec l'eau et du savon (*sits*).

(3) **Teacher:** 06.54.0 Bien! (*strolls down*) Un bon élève-eee avant de venir à l'école doit faire sa toilette. (*turns midway, starts back*) La toilette, il brosse ses dents. [1.1] (*turns, faces class*) Il lave ses habits, [1.5] Il [0.3] lav-ee [1.1] sson corps avec l'eau et du saavon. [0.9] Mais c'est ce que vous ne faites pas quand même, (*strolls down*) [0.3] mais [0.9] on doit faire comme ça [0.5] pour être propre, c'est pour éviter la malaa- [0.4] (*turning*) -die. [1.3] (*strolls forward, turn to class*) Bien! [3.7] Debout!

*English translation:*

(1)

d. 06.30.4 What should a [0.5] good student do before he comes to school? [0.3] Don't be afraid [0.3] one raises one's hand (*teacher in back of class*) [0.4] and answer. [0.3] If it is wrong, [0.8] we will say (*turns, starts forward*) that that's not it. [0.4] Yes, if it is right, [0.6] (*turns to class*) we will, [1.4] applaude, (*steps backwards facing class*) Yes, Iila. [1.2]

(2) **Iila:** 06.46.2 (*stands up*) He should wash his feet, he should brush his teeth, [1.0] he washes his clothes, [1.2] (*starts sitting down*) with water and soap. (*sits*)

(3) **Teacher:** 06.54.0 Good! (*strolls down*) A good stuuu-dent before coming to school should do his toilette. (*turns midway, starts back*) His toilette, he brushes his teeth. [1.1] (*turns, faces class*) He washes his clothes, [1.5] He [0.3] wash-es [1.1] hhhis body with water and soap. [0.9] But that's what you don't do anyway, (*strolls down*) [0.3] but [0.9] one should do like that [0.5] to be clean, it is to escape diseas- [0.4] (*turning*) -es[1.3] (*strolls forward, turn to class*) Well! [3.7] Stand up!

In the excerpt we see how the platform format and body idiom is at play. The normal body idiom for students in class is to sit at the desk oriented only towards the front of the class, or towards the teacher if he moves elsewhere in class. This orientation is part of the body idiom at school: the students must learn to sit orderly, that is facing one way and not interacting with your deskpartners.

In this particular case, though, the teacher was strolling up and down the aisle of the little classroom. The students still to a large degree oriented their gaze to him, as expected. They had been told to cross their arms, and largely did so, signaling their complete attention to what he was saying. However, as I was sitting

right in front of them, several students were also looking my way instead of only at the teacher, and one boy in the front row was positively staring.

An interesting aspect is the teacher's interpretation of my presence, in turn (1d), which is the first of several remarks on my presence in the class. He chooses here to point out to the class both the shame factor if they do not perform well in front of this visitor, and his idea of what they should do to present themselves as a diligently working and knowledgeable class: participate in answering his questions. He thus verbally reifies a core practice in 'doing school', as noted before on p. 250 in 7.2.2.

Iila's little list in turn (2) of what a good student should do before school has first clean his feet, second clean his mouth<sup>19</sup>, and wash his clothes; the use of soap and water comes as an afterthought. In his response in turn (3), the teacher does not call for other answers, but accepts Iila's proposition with a *Bieen!*, slightly drawn out to mark his intentions to carry on with the subject. He rephrases the answer, making it correspond more closely to his question and summing up the list in a single phrase, before repeating and changing the list. He skips the clean feet part, adding instead the need to wash the whole body, but in a slightly hesitant manner. He then comments that his students do not do so, even if one should. The comment, phrased somewhat oddly as it is a negative observation without being followed by an order of change, is still addressed to the class, and ties in with the agency attributed to the students by all of this theme: it touches from another perspective what the STUDENT should actively do in relation to school, not what his parents should see to or others should be responsible for. Still the teacher seems somewhat resigned to the fact that not all cleanliness and dress standards normally demanded of students are met in this particular village. Actually, all the girls in the classroom wore head scarves, though three girls only in the form of a narrow band around the head. The teacher made no remarks on this, apparently he was giving in to the stronger pressure here for girls to wear head covers.

The official reason for cleanliness standards is important school knowledge, though, and he uses a common teacher strategy to check for its presence in the class: in the key word *maladie* 'disease', he lengthens the vowel of the second syllable and makes a pause for the class to fill in the last syllable; but they fail to do so. As the pause is quite short [0.4 second], his intention is maybe rather to train for this cutoff point, than actually to elicit the lacking syllable. He then wraps up this section with a new *Bien!*, a long pause and the order to stand up.

<sup>19</sup>Though tooth brushes are by no means standard items of possession in Mipom.

**Participating with a personal twist**

The next turns, (4 – 8), in Transcript 7.11, are another example of using stand-up – sit-down routines as a major break before going on to another theme, the elicitation of today’s date starting in turn (9). In SIL, the students routinely accompany doing the action with verbal expressions in chorus, but depending on the teacher, these are not always used in later grades, as we saw in Transcript 7.7 on page 271 from the CP-class in Galim. In the paired up SIL & CP class in Mipom, the teacher prefers to keep the verbal parts. The students in Mipom are already used to this practice and give their verbal responses promptly while carrying out the orders.

**Transcript 7.11** *SIL & CP, Mipom, 30-01-2006, cont.*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (4) <b>Class:</b> 07.29.2 ( <i>Everybody gets up, arms still crossed</i> ) Je ma(*) lèèèv-ee.  | (4) <b>Class:</b> 07.29.2 ( <i>Everybody gets up, arms still crossed</i> ) I am staannding up.  |
| (5) <b>Teacher:</b> 07.31.9 Assieds! ( <i>writes on blackboard</i> )   | (5) <b>Teacher:</b> 07.31.9 Sit down! ( <i>writes on blackboard</i> )   |
| (6) <b>Class:</b> 07.32.9 ( <i>They sit down again, Ibi only crouches, anticipating the next command</i> ) Je m’assieds. [0.2]                             | (6) <b>Class:</b> 07.32.9 ( <i>They sit down again, Ibi only crouches, anticipating the next command</i> ) I am sitting down. [0.2]                         |
| (7) <b>Teacher:</b> 07.34.4 Debout! [0.3] ( <i>writes</i> )  | (7) <b>Teacher:</b> 07.34.4 Stand up! [0.3] ( <i>writes</i> )   |
| (8) <b>Class:</b> 07.35.5 ( <i>class get up again, speak louder</i> ) Je ma(*) lèèèv-ee. ( <i>several students stretch a bit as they remain standing</i> ) | (8) <b>Class:</b> 07.35.5 ( <i>class get up again, speak louder</i> ) I am staannding up. ( <i>several students stretch a bit as they remain standing</i> ) |

As the students carry out both parts of this practice, they are participating in ‘doing school’, though they are still somewhat lacking in verbal competence, see turns (4) and (8). The correct form of *I am standing up* in French is *je me lève*, but it seems the class had patterned this response phrase on its ‘sitting down’ counterpart: *Je m’assieds*, saying *ma* instead of *me*. Then in turn (6), Ibi, a boy of about fourteen years in CP, subverts the teacher’s commands just a little bit: he remains halfstanding at the ‘Sit down!’ command, in anticipation of the next order to stand up again. He has learned the pattern well enough to know what comes next, but not as yet internalised its practice so as to be willing to completely comply with it. Interestingly, he was the only student with such behaviour in my class observations, and he did it both here and in a later February recording, suggesting that this was something he had taken a habit to. Normally children starting in

SIL and going through the grades were completely conditioned to comply with these routine orders. Ibi had started school at an age at which he was already considered more or less an autonomous person, and had had maybe only one or two incomplete years of schooling before.

### Vying for the floor in Mipom

The elicitation of today's date is a routine done in every class every day in the morning. It is not as smooth in Mipom as might be wished for, but they finally get there.

**Transcript 7.12** *SIL & CP, Mipom, 30 January 2006, cont.*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- (9) a. **Teacher:** 07.38.0 Bien! (*wipes black-board while speaking*) [1.5] Qui peut nous donner la date d'aujourd'hui là? [1.8] Vendredi c'était le vingt-e-sept [0.3] janvier. [0.4] Aujourd'hui [0.8] ça sera [0.8] le quantième? (*strolls down*) [1.3] Aujourd'hui c'est– [0.2] le quantième? [0.7] Comme vendredi c'était le vingt-sept, [0.8] aujourd'hui c'est le quantième? (*some students whisper and turn to each other*) [3.9] (*strolls forward*) Hein? [1.8]
- (9) a. **Teacher:** 07.38.0 Well! (*wipes black-board while speaking*) [1.5] Who can give us the date of today here? [1.8] Friday it was the twenty-seventh of [0.3] January. [0.4] Today [0.8] it will be [0.8] which date? (*strolls down*) [1.3] Today it is– [0.2] which date? [0.7] As Friday it was the twenty-seventh, [0.8] today it is which date? (*some students whisper and turn to each other*) [3.9] (*strolls forward*) Hm? [1.8]
- b. 08.03.0 (*turns to class, speaks harshly*) Don't look at that! [0.6] Hm? [0.7] Answer the teacher's question. [0.4] You should not look only at that there, is it that, is- is- is it that which- which interests you? [2.1] (*some CP-students are looking at blackboard date trying to calculate today's date, two or three students have lifted their hands*)

### 7.3. REIFICATIONS OF PRACTICE

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- | <i>Original:</i>  | <i>English translation:</i>   |
|---|---|
| (9) 08.13.1 Qui peut nous donner la date d'aujourd'hui, c'est quel jour aujourd'hui?  | (9) 08.13.1 Who can give us the date of today, it is which day today?   |
| (10) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 08.15.6 ( <i>in back of CP, hand lifted, Iila has lowered his</i> ) Moi, monsieur.   | (10) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 08.15.6 ( <i>in back of CP, hand lifted, Iila has lowered his</i> ) Me, master.  |
| (11) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.17.0 Ahmadou! ( <i>several students in SIL and CP turn to watch Ahmadou</i> )   | (11) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.17.0 Ahmadou! ( <i>several students in SIL and CP turn to watch Ahmadou</i> )   |
| (12) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 08.18.7 Lundi le-, lundi le-, les vingt, vingt-huit janvier, lundi xxx ( <i>other students turn forward or look down as he fumbles</i> ) | (12) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 08.18.7 Monday the-, Monday the-, the twenty, twenty-eight January, Monday xxx ( <i>other students turn forward or look down as he fumbles</i> ) |
| (13) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.25.8 ( <i>cuts him short</i> ) Est-ce que c'est le vingt-huit? ( <i>Siroma first, Djeera second, lift their hands</i> )               | (13) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.25.8 ( <i>cuts him short</i> ) Is it the twenty-eight? ( <i>Siroma first, Djeera second, lift their hands</i> )                               |
| (14) <b>Siroma +Djeera:</b> 08.26.9 ( <i>S., hand lifted</i> ) Moi, monsieur.= ( <i>D., hand lifted</i> ) =Moi, monsieur.                                     | (14) <b>Siroma +Djeera:</b> 08.26.9 ( <i>S., hand lifted</i> ) Me, master.= ( <i>D., hand lifted</i> ) =Me, master.   |
| (15) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.28.3 Hein? [0.2] Tu as fait combien des jours à la maison?  | (15) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.28.3 Hm? [0.2] You have done how many days at home?   |
| (16) <b>Several:</b> 08.30.6 ( <i>utterances latching; Siroma snaps his fingers to get teacher's attention</i> ) Moi, monsieur!=Moi, monsieur!=Moi, monsieur. | (16) <b>Several:</b> 08.30.6 ( <i>utterances latching; Siroma snaps his fingers to get teacher's attention</i> ) Me, master!=Me, master!=Me, master.                  |
| (17) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.32.6 Vendredi c'était le vingt-sept.  | (17) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.32.6 Friday, it was the twenty-seventh.   |
| (18) <b>Somebody:</b> 08.33.9 Moi, monsieur   | (18) <b>Somebody:</b> 08.33.9 Me, master.   |
| (19) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.36.9 Aujourd'hui c'est le vingt-huit? [0.5] Tu as fais combien des jours à la maison?   | (19) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.36.9 Today it is the twenty-eight? [0.5] You have done how many days at home?   |

- | <i>Original:</i>   | <i>English translation:</i>   |
|--|---|
| (20) <b>Severai+Ahmadou:</b> 08.38.8 ( <i>Several voices, latching or half overlapping utterances</i> ) Moi monsieur; Moi, monsieur!         | (20) <b>Severai+Ahmadou:</b> 08.38.8 ( <i>Several voices, latching or half overlapping utterances</i> ) Me, sir; Me,sir!      |
| (20) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 08.38.8 Vingt-neuf. [0.6]   | (20) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 08.39.0 Twenty-nine. [0.6]   |
| (21) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.40.4 Ce n'est pas le vingt-neuf.   | (21) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.40.4 It is not the twenty-ninth.  |
| (22) <b>Severai:</b> 08.41.3 ( <i>Several voices, latching or half overlapping utterances</i> ) Moi, monsieur. Moi, monsieur. Moi, monsieur. | (22) <b>Severai:</b> 08.41.3 ( <i>Several voices, latching or half overlapping utterances</i> ) Me, master. Me, master. Me,s. |
| (23) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.43.8 Oui. Mam- ee, Ahmadou? [0.6] Eee- [0.5] Bouba?  | (23) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.43.8 Yes. Mam- ee Ahmadou? [0.6] Eee-[0.5] Bouba?   |
| (24) <b>Bouba:</b> 08.47.8 Lundi le trente [2.3] février, deux-mille six.  | (24) <b>Bouba:</b> 08.47.8 Monday the thirtieth [2.3] of February, two-thousand and six.                                      |
| (25) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.52.9 ( <i>lighter voice</i> ) Est-ce que c'est trente février? [1.2] Hein?   | (25) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.52.9 ( <i>lighter voice</i> ) Is it thirtieth of February? [1.2] Hm?                                  |
| (26) <b>Bouba:</b> 08.56.1 Janvier deux-mille six.   | (26) <b>Bouba:</b> 08.56.1 January two thousand and six.  |
| (27) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.58.2 Très bien! [1.8] Asseyez vous.  | (27) <b>Teacher:</b> 08.58.2 Very good! [1.8] Sit down.   |
| (28) <b>Class:</b> 09.01.2 ( <i>Low voices, as they sit down</i> ) Je m'assieds.   | (28) <b>Class:</b> 09.01.2 ( <i>Low voices, as they sit down</i> ) I am sitting down.   |

In starting this elicitation routine, the teacher gives the class one piece of information to go on: the date of their last schoolday, which was Friday the 27 January—this is also written on the blackboard. Some of the students clearly try to calculate the date from this, but as the weekend has intervened they cannot just add ‘one’ to the earlier date. They do not jump to answer at first, though: the teacher has posed his question six times before Ahmadou says ‘Me, sir’ the first time. Ahmadou has a go then, but the teacher stops him before he has completed his sentence with a new question casting doubt on his answer, turn (13). The teacher uses Ahmadou’s wrong answer as a basis for further elicitations directed to Ahmadou, in turns (13), (15), (16) together with (18), and beginning of (22), before he decisively allocates a turn to another student at the end of turn (22). From turn (14), and in turns (17), (19) and (21), other students lift their hands and say ‘Me, sir!’, acting as ‘turn sharks’ (Erickson 2004, 54-55) in between the teacher’s turns as they sense that Ahmadou’s response has gone amiss. His failure thus opens a new slot for student turns, and they actively try to enter it by



getting the teacher's attention, doing his bidding of 'participating in the teacher's question'. Bouba, another boy of about the same age, finally gets a turn, but muddles his answer by getting the month wrong.

In turn (9-b), the teacher again mentions my camera, but this time only as a disturbing element: he accuses his students of being more engaged with the camera than responding to his questions. While again the students, as far as I can see, were not too preoccupied with the camera, the teacher had no patience with the possible lack of attention on their part in the monofocal platform format of the classroom. Again there is a double bottom here: the teacher uses the presence of another possible focuspoint to put the blame on the students for their far from outstanding performance: it is their own fault as they are not paying attention to the only legitimate focuspoint. It is here again a case of holding the audience accountable for watching the platform action, instead of holding the teacher accountable for doing his part well. With turn (26) the elicitation of today's date is finally completed and in turn (27) the teacher wraps it up with both a verbal evaluation and a call for a shift in body configuration. The class gives the prescribed response both verbally and in action.

## 7.4 Institutional settings and local practices

In the transcripts it is possible to see how different ways of 'doing school' are developing in the different classrooms. While the institutional setting of school calls for a particular classroom layout with a particular participation structure and body idiom, the actual interactions within the institution are slightly differently carried out. The participant most visibly shaping the practice in each setting is of course the teacher, but the students are also taking part in shaping their community of practice. The process is more visible in the data from Mipom, as this is already well into the school year, while the data from Galim is from the very start of term. Still the CP-class in Galim, with its group of experienced redoers, shows some competence in 'doing school' also at the grade level just started.

The teacher in Galim worked at this point on changing some of the core practices, such as the verbal part of standing up routines, which he saw as a SIL thing. He drilled his students in correct classroom behaviour and body idiom, and in general was much more demanding in his treatment of most of the students in his class than the Mipom teacher. He was rewarded by having most of his students follow his directives. Still he found it necessary to treat differently at least two students in his class.<sup>20</sup> He overlooks the offending headscarf of a girl who notoriously does not do what he tells her, and he reverts to deriding a boy

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<sup>20</sup>Both of these are probably redoers, as he seems to know their capacities quite well after only a week at school.

who is frequently ‘out of sync’ with the activity of the class, taking both of them to be irredeemable cases.

A quite palpable difference between the two classes is the length and amount of teacher turns. Outside such well-established routines as Stand-up–Sit-down!, the teacher’s turns in Mipom are long and characterised by repetitions of questions, while the teacher in Galim does not repeat so much in his turns.

By the end of January, the one-class village school of Mipom was starting to have traits of a mature community of practice engaging in the joint enterprise of ‘doing school’. The students had acquired some of the core practices, such as the standard school body configurations and verbal expressions belonging with them. They pronounced one verbal response wrong (‘Je ma(\*) lève’, turns (4) and (8)) without the teacher correcting it—the class had thus established a local practice on this point.

In Mipom the teacher had adapted somewhat his ways of teaching. Though the students learned to reproduce the official text of the definition of a good student, they did not necessarily carry out the commands of the text, as the teacher noted in turn (1d). The girls had quite subverted the usual ban against headscarves. But the teacher was more lenient on things such as cleanliness and headwear while steadily working to get his students to conform to the platform format. His knowledge of the class had changed as well. While he in the earlier recording from the very first day in this class had appealed directly to *les redoublants* as a group, see Transcript 7.4 on page 258, he now clearly knew much more about the competences of individual students, and used this knowledge in allocating speech turns. He also used actively such devices as asking the same question several times, also doubling it with ‘Hein?’ and leaving the students quite long pauses for plucking up their courage and respond. This opened more occasions for allocating turns to students, and allowed them to be hesitant while still inviting them to participate. He thus strives to create a zone of legitimate peripheral participation by adapting his questioning style.

On the other hand, there is a rhythm to even the most informal verbal interaction, which will make the participants feel that something should be said at certain points (Erickson 2004, 7–10). By being fairly slow to respond to the teacher’s questions, the students in Mipom in a way also force him to repeat them several times. As nobody else responds with a bid for the turn, the teacher fills in the empty slot by repeating his question or saying ‘Hein?’ This mechanism has maybe gone a step further in the Mipom class: the teacher often phrases his questions in a sort of prosodic triad, with a start, middle and end question, and it is only after the third repetition that the answering slot really opens. Still, the students had begun to grasp the importance of participating at answering questions. They were also becoming adept at judging when the teacher was not pleased with an answer so they could have another go at getting a turn for

#### 7.4. INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS AND LOCAL PRACTICES

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themselves.

There were different responses to the demands of the teacher within the class: while many CP-students clearly felt responsible for giving some answers to the teacher's questions, the SIL side of class remained fairly passive at such moments. They left questions to the older and more competent students, even if they were presented to the whole class, such as the 'today's date' routine. The teacher also seemed to direct his gaze and attention more to the CP class when asking about e.g. the date of today. Roles and functions thus were starting to crystallise in the local practice. But everybody participated in practices involving body configurations for the class as a whole, and the SIL group readily repeated phrases rehearsed by the teacher.

Roles and identities are forming within the two classes, in Galim based mostly on a division of student participants into competent members who eagerly participate in vying for turns and often get it, less competent participants who less often ask for and get the floor, and incompetent or marginal members. In Mipom, roles in class seem to be more based on the usual age division of Nizaa society, where older persons are in a position to order younger ones about, but where they also have to take responsibility for complicated tasks.

In this chapter I have looked at classes as communities of practice and demonstrated that primary school classes in Cameroon easily become such communities since they more often than not have a large group of redoers in class. These students already know the practice of 'doing school' and act as core member in the new class. I have also drawn attention to the *platform format* of Cameroonian classrooms, where the teacher is the only point worthy of attention. The last sections looked at the development of the class in the little village of Mipom as a community of practice, and compared it to a CP class in Galim. Some differences in the linguistic interaction of the classes were pointed out.

In the next chapter, we shall make an microanalysis of a lesson session in the Mipom class, now turning the attention fully on the concept of speech genres.



## Chapter 8

# Verbal interaction and speech genres in class

Speech genres are part of the communicative repertoire developed by a community of practice. As entrenched linguistic structures, cfr. 2.5.2, speech genres have both conventionalised meanings and conventionalised form, but in keeping with the view of cognitive linguistics, I see them as *schematic*, that is as underdetermining the forms and the meanings produced in an actual usage event of a genre. As all other linguistic structures, speech genres are not absolute rules of structure imposed on language, but tendencies emerging out of practice, becoming conventionalised recognisable patterns. They are typically part of the shared repertoire of communication developed in a community of practice. As such they are useful to explore, because they give rich information about the community of practice in question. Communities of practice are places where ways of thinking and behaving become entrenched in people. In the preceding chapter I looked at school classes in the Galim area as communities of practice, with the joint enterprise of ‘doing school’. Speech genres are a part of this, and some of the speech genres used in class are what will particularly occupy us in the present chapter.

It is important to remember two things at this point, concerning the nature of speech genres as interpreted in a cognitive linguistics perspective. First, speech genres are as linguistic items present in different ways in different speakers and listeners. Second, the distribution of speech genres in a given group of people changes over time. This means that what for one participant in an interacting group is a transparent and meaningful pattern of language use may for others be opaque and incomprehensible. However, as the participants continue to interact, building a community of practice, the patterns spread throughout the group, new patterns may form, and the old ones are often more or less changed. Meanings arise for the participants in this process, but we should not take for granted that the patterns will have the same meanings for all who use them (see Chapter 2;

Hymes (1972)).

Patterns of this kind create discourse expectations, so that a use of one part of a pattern leads the participants to expect a certain continuation. As Langacker (2001, 151–2) points out, this may be true of linguistic units on any level of analysis, from sounds, through morphemes, words, clauses, sentences and texts. But for the present purpose I look for patterns mostly above word or sentence levels, the notion of *speech genre*, or typical forms which utterances are cast in (Bakhtin 1986, 80). Speech genres emerge at the level of utterances in multiparty interaction, also in the context of schooling. In order to get an adequate description of relevant speech genres from authentic language data, more information is needed than a bare description of verbal form, and from more than one usage event.

The only way of identifying speech genres is to analyse actual language use in the school context I am examining. I first work to discern speech genres of teaching and learning in a class context by finding recurrent commonalities of language use and look at their material form. Then going back to the first research question of this study, I look at how they are used to shape interaction in class. Some are monological, expected to shape the utterance of one participant, others are dialogical, shaping sequences of utterances by several participants. In some cases described in this chapter a speech genre schema is signalled by one participant, but not followed up by his interlocutor.

The phonological pole of a usage event extends beyond the strictly verbal interaction to include other vocalisation channels such as intonation, voice quality, gestures and other resources employed by the participants to communicate. The pauses between and within turns are one such resource, as they serve to pace the interaction and index open slots where others can insert turns. Utterances with pauses, accompanying gestures, voice quality and intonation belong with the vocalisation of the usage event.

The semantic pole includes besides linguistic knowledge, all kinds of pragmatic and extralinguistic knowledge. The description of conceptualisation channels must include such features as the objective situation, information structure, and speech management, just as the channels of vocalisation must include much more than only verbal content and a few gestures, to get the full picture.

This means that the participants in the event with their relationship to each other, their visible bodies, the physical surroundings and objects, the participation framework guiding the interaction, all belong with the conceptualisation of the event. To the degree that such conceptualisations are paired with certain vocalisations and repeated, they will tend to become cognitive and social resources, forming discourse expectations. They will function as orienting frameworks in the interactional activity.

In a usage event, an instance of actual use of the speech genre, all these channels come together in producing meaning for the participants (Langacker 2001, 144). Both conceptualisation channels and vocalisation channels of usage events can only be taken adequately into account by doing microanalyses of authentic language data. By means of such an analysis it becomes possible to discern the speech genres which shape the interaction by creating discourse expectations. By looking at the same group over a period of time, change in the distribution and the form of the genres may be discovered.

In the preceding chapter I described many of the features of the ‘objective situation’ of language use in the classes I observed, building a rich framework for a further analysis of interaction. In this chapter I will consider more closely some of the speech genres typically developed by these classes. In Section 8.1 I will examine the manner in which pedagogical models intertwine with genres of talk. In Section 8.2 I will analyse one specific session closely to describe some speech genres emergent in my school data, and texts produced in these genres.

### 8.1 Genres and pedagogical models

Already in the preceding chapter we encountered some of the verbal interaction patterns and speech genres (see 5.1 on page 140 for discussion of terms) of the classrooms, such as the stand up – sit down routines and greetings. These patterns shape both bodily behaviours and *texts*, oral or written, used in class. Learning to master all the practices (the speech genres, the behaviour patterns and the texts used in class) is an important part of becoming a competent participant in ‘doing school’, and of succeeding in school, both from an institutional and an individual point of view. The existence of speech genres known to the students from many previous lessons helps organise the interaction, but they are also traps when a student is not able to conform to the genres’ requirements. As pointed out by Briggs & Bauman (1992), genres serve not only to organise text and make it orderly, but act as disorganising principles when a text is displayed as fragmented and below standards when it does not follow the genres invoked.

The general verbal interactional pattern of teacher-student interaction in class is quite asymmetric. As noted in 7.3 on page 260, there is a certain monological quality to the dialogues of the classroom. The students’ main activity is to pay close attention to what the teacher is doing and to respond to his initiatives. The teacher has absolute speaking rights, and uses them to allocate speech turns in sequential order, which is very nearly the only way that the student legitimately can have a turn of speaking in class. The teacher himself, on the other hand, is allowed to interrupt student turns and can freely evaluate them according to his own conception of their validity.

But within this asymmetrical interactional pattern, there are several speech genres to consider, both dialogical and monologic in setup. Some produce series of related texts, others are interactional routines with highly constrained forms, others again can be considered basic interactional patterns in class. Some are complex, in the sense of incorporating other simpler speech genres in their setup.

The most general category is the *leçon* ‘lesson’ which is an institutionally endorsed genre as much as a spontaneously emerging structure. As in France, a lesson of in Cameroon is conceived of as a series of sessions over several days using the same materials and with the same goals (Anderson-Levitt 2004, 233–4).<sup>1</sup> Being a recognised entity of pedagogical activities, it needs some special consideration before I launch into an analysis of a specific session of a lesson, to see how the lesson genre is produced in classroom talk.

### 8.1.1 The phases of a lesson

As a genre the lesson is characterised by its production of a series of related authorised texts over a few days, building a common ground of both content knowledge and knowledge of the forms required for the texts. The formal aspects of the text are prioritized, though. It is a complex genre, since other genres often are recruited to build up the texts of the lesson, notably the general pattern of elicitation questions and responses, explanatory lecture sequences, ‘finish my word!’-techniques and French language modelling sequences.

In her PhD dissertation, Moore (2004) isolates a Cameroonian pedagogical model common to both Qur’anic and public schooling in her data from Maroua (Extreme North province, Cameroon). In both settings the goal is to learn texts in an unknown language by heart: the Qur’an in Arabic and language dialogues in French, respectively. Both kinds of schooling strongly emphasise correct phonetic rendering of the texts, while downplaying comprehension and productive use of the language in the initial stages. Labeled *Guided repetition*, the model consists of four phases, Modeling, Imitation, Rehearsal and Performance. In the public school setting of French language lessons, the phases translate into a *présentation*, a *fixation* and a *dramatisation* phase<sup>2</sup> (Moore 2004, 371, 403).

The *présentation phase* of a French lesson goes back and forth between modeling and imitating activities. The phase is meant to build up a certain understanding of the situation or content of the lesson, by naming characters, settings, the relationship between characters and the like. Then the lesson goes

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<sup>1</sup>The same pattern is found in another former French colony, the Republic of Guinea (Anderson-Levitt 2004), see also Moore (2004, 282–4).

<sup>2</sup>The first two labels are what the teachers themselves name these phases of their teaching activity, while Moore seems to have dubbed the third herself; to the teachers this also may belong to the *fixation* phase.



## 8.1. PEDAGOGICAL MODELS

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on to model a dialogue said by the characters. Transcripts 7.2 on page 256 to 7.5 on page 259 can serve as an example of a *présentation* sequence in Mipom, which later continued with the modeling of a dialogue turn by turn while the class imitated the lines.

In the Rehearsal, or *fixation*, phase, the dialogue is repeated many times, in chorus, by groups of students playing the roles, by individual renderings of the lines. The teacher allocates individual turns first to competent volunteers, then to competent non-volunteers and finally less competent non-volunteers. This gives the weaker students a chance to hear the correct text several times before being called upon to do it themselves. Then in the final Performance or *dramatisation* phase, pairs or trios of students play out the dialogue as a role-play or skit in front of class, with appropriate gestures, body postures and eye gaze direction. Not all sessions of a lesson would contain all the phases of Moore's model: the presentational part would be largely in the first session, and the final performance would be more marked at the end of the lesson period.

This Guided Repetition model was clearly visible in my data as well, and not only in French language lessons. For most of the subjects the teachers seemed to use more or less the same procedure, except that instead of learning dialogues and dramatise them in class, the class learned texts of the knowledge they were supposed to have acquired during the lesson. In higher grades this was copied down in notebooks (in the *cahiers de résumé*), while SIL and partly CP only learned them by heart. Since the texts to learn were in French, any subject could at any point turn into a French lesson, where the goal changed from acquiring some piece of knowledge, to acquire a correct verbal representation of this knowledge in French.

Even though I as an outside analyst am able to discern the various phases of teaching, the transitions were not overtly advertised by the teachers to their class. There were sectioning devices (cfr. 8.2.3 on page 301) which indicated the end of a sequence and the start of the next, but the teacher never clearly stated that they were now leaving, say, presentation behind and going on to rehearse the target material. This means that the repetitions of the same material, often by means of very much the same questions, were not explained to the students at all. It may have been quite unclear to the students why a teacher should ask once more about the same things, or what he was after when asking his questions. Their only option was to use what lower level clues they could find in the class room interaction. The speech genres become in this way orientational points on a local level, but without any clear connection to the general activity structure of classroom work.

### 8.1.2 Rote learning after all

In spite of the prevalent teacher discourse of rote learning as a problematic and deficient way to learn, see 7.2.2 on page 250, the teachers often ended up requiring exact renderings of texts. The following transcript,<sup>3</sup> from the lesson of Practical Hygiene treated more thoroughly in 8.2, shows this quite clearly: Yacoubou gives the word *pompi* in his response to the teacher's question about where water can be found. 'Pompi' is a local word for the drill hole well in Galim and other larger villages which is operated with a foot pump and delivers absolutely pure ground water. The word seems to be known by several of his class mates as well, several of them smile to hear it, turn (2). But the teacher responds with a flat *Non* and proceeds to elicit the correct French expression *forage*, 'drill hole', also supposedly known to the students from an earlier session of the lesson.

The teacher puts the responsibility for knowing the correct name on the class in turns (3) and (7) by reminding them that the name had been said in the earlier session, implying that they would know if they had paid attention.

#### Transcript 8.1 SIL-CP Mipom, Practical hygiene 23.02.2006.

##### Original:

- (1) **Teacher:** 00.00 (*teacher writes on blackboard*) Au marigot- (*completes writing with audible dot*) [1.8] Où encore? (*turns to class*) [2.1] On peut trouver l'eau au marigot, où encore. [0.7] On peut trouver l'eau encore où. [2.05] Hein? [0.9] Seulement au marigot? On a dit le matin que quoi; [0.2] Oui. [0.2]
- (2) **Yacoubou:** 00.19.2 (*sitting*) Pompi. (*several smile*) [0.8]
- (3) **Teacher:** 00.20.6 Non. [0.3] Le nom, on avait donné le nom le matin [0.3] que quoi. (*inaudible answer*) [1.4] Hein? (*Djoulde lifts finger*) [2.4] Le nom de pompi là, (*teacher points at Djoulde, he starts rising*) on avait donné [ça le matin.] (*Djoulde starts speaking, inaudible*) [0.4] Hein?

##### English translation:

- (1) **Teacher:** 00.00 (*teacher writes on blackboard*) At the stream- (*completes writing with audible dot*) [1.8] Where else? (*turns to class*) [2.1] One may find water at the stream, where else. [0.7] One may find water where else. [2.05] Hm? [0.9] Only at the stream? We said this morning that, what; [0.2] Yes. [0.2]
- (2) **Yacoubou:** 00.19.2 (*sitting*) Pompi. (*several smile*) [0.8]
- (3) **Teacher:** 00.20.6 No. [0.3] The name, we gave the name this morning, [0.3] that what. (*inaudible answer*) [1.4] Hm? (*Djoulde lifts finger*) [2.4] That name of pompi, (*teacher points at Djoulde, he starts rising*) we gave [that in the morning.] (*Djoulde starts speaking, inaudible*) [0.4] Hm?

<sup>3</sup>The transcription conventions are described in 3.3.3 on page 85.

*Original:*

- (4) **Djoulde:** 00.31.7(*standing*) [xx dans] le puits. [0.2]
- (5) **Teacher:** 00.32.4 Hein?
- (6) **Djoulde:** 00.32.7 (*standing*) Puits.
- (7) **Teacher:** 00.33.5 Dans le- [0.1] puits. [0.2] Au puits- [0.6] Oui? [0.8] (*start writing*) -au puits. [0.3] Oui, (*ends writing with an audible dot*) le nom de pompi là, on avait donné ça le matin, c'était quoi? [0.8] (*murmurs in class*) Vous avez déjà oublié? [4.9] (*some small talk, somebody says 'Oui'*) Pompi, c'est quoi? (*Yacoubou lifts hand*) [0.3] Oui. [2.1]
- (8) **Yacoubou:** 00.51 (*stands up*) Forage. [0.4]

*English translation:*

- (4) **Djoulde:** 00.31.7(*standing*) [xx in the] well. [0.2]
- (5) **Teacher:** 00.32.4 Hm?
- (6) **Djoulde:** 00.32.7 (*standing*) Well.
- (7) **Teacher:** 00.33.5 In the- [0.1] well.[0.2] At the well- [0.6] Yes? [0.8] (*start writing*) -at the well. [0.3] Yes, (*ends writing with an audible dot*) that name of pompi, we gave that in the morning, what was it? [0.8] (*murmurs in class*) Have you forgotten already? [4.9] (*some small talk, somebody says 'Yes'*) Pompi, what's that? (*Yacoubou lifts hand*)[0.3] Yes. [2.1]
- (8) **Yacoubou:** 00.51 (*stands up*) Drill hole.

### The language problem

It seems that variety of expression and flippancy are not positive traits for a student to have, what the teacher is after is the correct word. He gets it in turn (8), from the same student who supplied the funny word. In the meantime he has also got another suggestion of where to find water, and amended it somewhat for writing on the blackboard and memorising. We can see how the lesson content is skewed from being about where to find water to being about how the locations of water are expressed in French.

One reason for the tendency to demand verbatim renderings of the material to be learned is the fact that it is notoriously difficult for the teacher to do a real comprehension check on his students: the students usually do not know enough French to be able to rephrase knowledge and show a true understanding, while the teacher may not share any other language with his students. He is thus forced to go by verbatim renderings of the taught verbal representations as the only way to know if the students have learned the lesson. It is correct French renderings which will be asked for in the tests ending the school year as well.

## 8.2 Analysis of a lesson session

Speech genres function first and foremost within whole stretches of verbal interaction, organising them. A good way to discover such structures is, therefore, to look for them in a complete and bounded chunk of interaction. Lesson sessions can be used as such a unit: it is a type of speech event (Waugh et al. 2006, 121) well known to those ‘doing school’ in Cameroon, as I noted in 8.1.

In the following sections I shall analyse one such lesson session recorded in February 2006. To be able to handle the whole unit in an orderly way, I first make an outline as a compressed version of the nearly 18 minutes long session.<sup>4</sup> The outline format chosen is a hierarchical sectioning of the session’s turns, made on the basis of change of theme, pedagogical phases and the use of verbal sectioning devices. In the later analysis of speech genres found in smaller sequences of the session, I refer to the outline presented below.

The outline first has a basic division of the session in Start, Main body and Closure, and then represents a fairly common use of the Guided Repetition model in the *leçon* genre: the phases of Guided repetitions surface as level 2 subsections. Further subdivisions on level 3 and 4 are made within these phase sections again: this is where some of the speech genres schemas appear.

### 8.2.1 Outline of the session: Practical Hygiene in Mipom

The session took place in the combined SIL and CP class of Mipom and was taught to the class as a whole, rather than as a specific SIL or CP session. That day, the 23 February, the class went through the material three times, in the morning (not recorded), in the midmorning after the first break, and again before ending the day. The transcription is from the midmorning session; unfortunately some turns in the beginning were lost before I got the videocam out.

The theme of the lesson was drinking water and its qualities, and thus contained both a content knowledge component with obvious connections to everyday life, and a language learning component. The teacher used questions to elicit verbal representations of ‘water knowledge’ from the class. As bits and pieces of relevant information were brought forward, either by the students or by himself, he amended phrases and wrote lists of them on the blackboard, creating visible as well as audible texts. They trained on text pieces, both single words and complete sentences. The teacher sought to explain new expressions by comparisons to known things, and he also made use of a couple of Fulfulde glosses to explain a word. After going through the qualities of water with the class as a

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<sup>4</sup>The complete transcription is found in Appendix B.1 on page 367, since it is too long to put directly in the text here (177 turns, 22 pages).



Figure 8.1: The village school of Mipom: CP left



Figure 8.2: Mipom: SIL right

whole, he singled out individual students for questioning, this time selecting non-volunteering rather than volunteering students, before wrapping up the session. The closure sequence contained a stand up – sit down routine and the question of what subject the class had been viewing in the preceding minutes.

A striking feature of the session is the amount of repetition within it, on all levels, which is visible even in the outline. The repetitions become more comprehensible, however, when seen in the light of the ideas of the *New Pedagogical Approach* presented in 7.2.2 on page 249 and the *Guided Repetition model* presented above, combined with the *community of practice* perspective which I adopted in Chapter 7 on page 235.

**Technicalities:** In the outline below, the sequence of turns belonging to each section is noted within parentheses after the descriptive label of each section. The larger level 2 sections are also have noted provided with start and end time from the video clip, given as minutes.seconds.decimal (00.00.0).

The larger sections' themes are mainly given as questions, these correspond to the main question pursued by the teacher in each section. Student-supplied information in answering the questions is marked with S, teacher-supplied information with T. (The very first item ('In streams') is marked by ?, since it was brought up before I started recording.)

Some teacher turns function as hinges in the proceedings, they both wrap up one section and set the theme for the next section. Where this is overtly marked the turn is subdivided. When the transition is smoother, no such marking is made in the transcript, but the turn is noted both on the end of one section and as the start of the next. Some of the student turns are not 'public', in the sense that they are not meant to enter the teacher–student interaction, but rather are directed to more or less specific fellow students. They are still counted, as they are part of the general 'goings-on' in the class. Most student turns are part of the text production in the class, however, and enter the official interaction of the room.

### **Session outline, Practical Hygiene**

**Start** –not recorded

**Main body** Turns (1–161), 00.00–14.53.8

1. **Rehearsal of old material:** Where is water found? (1–19a), 00.00–02.21.7

(a) ?: In streams (1)

(b) S: In wells (2–7)

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- (c) S: In drill holes (7–17)
  - (d) T: List of places (17–19a)
2. **Transition to new material:** How is water? (19b–47a), 02.21.7–04.13.7
- (a) How is stream water (19b–45a)
    - i. S: Dirty (20–35)
    - ii. T: Not clean, not clear (35–45a)
  - (b) Where is clean, clear water found? (45b–47a)
    - i. S: In drill holes (46–47a)
3. **Presentation of new material:** How is clean, clear water? (47b–89), 04.13.7–09.42.7
- (a) S: Uncoloured (48–65)
  - (b) T: Without flavour (65–78a)
  - (c) T: Inodorous (78b–86)
  - (d) T: Lecture/quality list (86–87)
  - (e) T: Lecture, drinking water equals clean water (88–89)
4. **Performance of new material:** How is drinking water/clean water? (90–135), 09.42.7–12.51.3
- (a) S: Uncoloured (91–101)
  - (b) S: Inodorous (101–103)
    - i. Language modeling, inodorous (103–126)
    - ii. Language modeling, other qualities (127–132)
  - (c) T: Lecture, Without flavour (133–134)
  - (d) T: Quality list (135)
5. **Performance of new material:** How is drinking water? Individual checks, yes/no or how (135–157), 12.51.3–14.13.4

- (a) Dirty? No (135–146)
- (b) How? Clean; inodorous (147–157)

6. **Summing up by T:** Lecture, qualities (157–164), 14.13.4–14.53.8

- (a) T: Inodorous, (157–159)
- (b) T: Uncoloured ((159), 161–162)
- (c) T: Without flavour (163–164)

**Closure of session** Turns (165–179), 14.53.8–17.18.2

1. **Break:** Stand up–sit down sequence (165–173a), 14.53.8–15.11.7
2. **Ending:** What subject was this? (173b–179), 15.11.7–17.18.2
  - (a) T: Practical hygiene (171b–177)

### 8.2.2 Levels and speech genres

The outline presented above may seem to refer first and foremost to content for dividing up the session, but I have also used formal features to identify sections, such as beginning and end markers, these will be discussed in 8.2.3. With the help of such markers at least four levels and several speech genres within the session can be identified, as shown also by the hierarchical layout of the outline.

**Level 1:** (Start), Main body and Closure of lesson session

**Level 2:** Pedagogical phases of the lesson

**Level 3:** Contentdriven question-answer sequences; Explanatory lecture sections

**Level 4:** Rehearsals and French trainings sequences; Class management sequences

In the outline above, Level 1 is represented by descriptive labels in bold case; it has the three items Start, Main body and Closure. Level 2 is represented by the subsections numbered 1.-6. in the main body, these are the pedagogical phases of the lesson more or less as found in the Guided Repetition model. In these subsections the theme of each phase given in the form of the main question posed



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by the teacher. Subsections 1.–2. in the Closure sequence are also based on pedagogical considerations.

Level 3 is represented by letters under each subsection, each sequence thus numbered contains a question-answer sequence or a teacher lecture, each defined by a specific topic.<sup>5</sup> Level 4 has stretches of language modeling and imitation, and spontaneous class management sequences—the last group is not marked in the outline as they generally are quite short and often cut across other boundaries; they are not directly related to lesson content.

As mentioned above, the lesson as a genre is not a monolithic and rigid form, it easily enlists different interaction patterns and speech genres to create texts to be learned. The levels are, therefore, more guidelines than absolute categories. One common variation is to have explanatory sequences that are subordinated to a level 3 section, as well as explanatory sequences which are level 3 sections in their own right. In French language lessons one would also possibly want to move rehearsals and French training sequences up to Level 2.

The speech genres found within this session have their own formal features and characteristics, as we shall see in the following sections of this chapter. Sectioning devices that mark discourse boundaries are one part of these features. The following list gives some of the speech genres found in this session.

### **Speech genres in the session**

- completion sequences for checking and rehearsal purposes.
- elicitation questions and responses (for presentation, performance and rehearsing)
- lectures and explanations
- listlike texts
- modeling and imitation
- class management

Putting the label ‘speech genres’ on the items above amounts to see them as schemas abstracted from many usage events and entrenched as linguistic units (see 2.5.2). I can do this in the context of this one session because all of the items are also abundantly present in other observed sessions, both in this particular class and in other classes of the area. However, we should not forget that such schemas

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<sup>5</sup>These are comparable to the concept of Topically Related Sets (TRS) used by Mehan (1979) in his pioneering analyses of classroom discourse, cited in Cazden (2001, 32,37).

become entrenched in language users *by way of use*. This means that the teacher may have experienced thousand of usage events of say, modeling and imitation, in different classes during his career so far, while his students have a much shorter use history. Their schemas of some speech genres may be quite a bit more fussy and substantially less detailed than the teacher's. Or, just as likely, it may contain too much detail and fail to make the relevant generalisations, not having enough usage events yet to build on. It is of course difficult to know exactly what goes on inside the heads of a teacher and his thirty-odd students, and I would not claim to do so, but occasionally during this session the differing conceptualisations of the teacher and his student become visible in the interaction between them.

The remarks above are part of what it means to see linguistic structures, in this case speech genres, as *emergent*. The other part is to recognise that there is no such thing as THE speech genre of modeling and imitation, to use that example once more. Structures do not have "an essential inner core of constant meaning" but depend on previous uses and contexts experienced by the present user (Hopper 1998, 157). Modeling and imitation is certainly is a much-used practice in Cameroonian classroom, and it is possible at any point to see certain recurrent features of this practice, but that is no guarantee against the practice having some different features tomorrow, or next year, or to have a different form and meaning in some particular classroom community of practice. So when I say that the students have not *yet* acquired this or that schema, I do not claim that there is a fixed and predefined schema to acquire, only that they do not master this particular part of the structure of interaction in the same way as the teacher.

### **Structure and repetition**

Repetitions of more or less the same material are easily seen in the outline. The theme of the first subsection of the main body is where water is found. It is a repetition or rehearsal of 'old material'. Here the students are reminded several times about what they had talked about earlier in the morning. After this and the transition phase in subsection 2., the 'new material' question about the qualities of drinking water or clean water is brought up in 3 separate rounds of questions, subsections 3–5, each rounded off with small explanatory lecture sequences or lists of qualities.

Subsections 3. and 4. are the longest in the outline, 4 min.27 sec. and 3 min.08 sec, respectively. Subsection 3 is a presentation phase with explaining and modeling of new material. Subsection 4 rehearses and performs the same material and has language modeling and imitational activities. The teacher selects students who have volunteered for answering by lifting their hand.

Subsection 5 is shorter, only 1 min.22 sec.; it is also a joint rehearsal and performance phase, but the teacher now selects mostly nonvolunteering students

for answering and he partly simplifies the questions.

Even more repetition goes on than I have made visible in the outline, as there are rehearsals of single keywords, of complete sentences and simply the same questions being asked several times of different people. Furthermore, at the time of this session, the class was about five months into the school year and had developed specific ways of talking, some different from, and some similar to, the ways found on the first day of school in October (cfr. 7.2.4 on page 255, and 7.4 on page 283). An example of such ways of talking is the habit developed by the teacher and his class of having the teacher pose the question at least three or four times before anybody volunteers for answering (see turns (1), (19b), (47b), (61), (65a+68), (78), (88), (135), (171), (173) in the complete transcription of the session, see B.1 on page 367).

While the many repetitions of the same material with frequent digressions on pronunciation and text-training seemingly make the session somewhat chaotic and disorganised, we should recognise that the outline shows another picture. There is a structure to the session, which proceeds from known material supplied by the students to new material mostly provided by the teacher. Then after going through new material, the teacher checks for uptake before he closes the session by well known routines. The repetitions have their structured place within the session because they are tied to pedagogical models and ideologies, and also partly are emergent traits of the community of practice evolving in this school.

The repetitive character of the session can thus be explained by using the different perspectives I have referred to above and in Chapter 7:

**The Guided Repetition model** accounts for the general rehearsal activities of the session, since it uses as its main pedagogical method novice imitation of expert modeling together with thorough rehearsal of material to be learned.

**The New Pedagogical Approach** accounts for the extensive use of elicitation questions to present material. The approach promotes using the same questions several times to let more students get a chance to verbally express target material and thereby rehearse it more thoroughly themselves, and in the class as a whole as well, cfr. 7.2.2 on page 249.

**The Community of Practice perspective** accounts for more special repetition features of interaction in the class, such as the multiple questioning style of the teacher.

### 8.2.3 Sectioning devices in the session

The importance of the sectioning devices is their close connection to discourse expectations and situational meanings. They are part of what makes genres

“orienting frameworks” and “interpretive procedures” (Hanks 1987, 670). I will therefore start the more specific treatment of speech genres by identifying these markers and the speech genres in the sections they single out.

### **Level 1 section markers**

In the outline, the Closure part of the session is marked by a stand up – sit down sequence, thus a large break routine, as already noted in Section 7.3 on page 260 (see also the comments to Transcript 7.8 on page 272). The final sequence of eliciting the subject treated (in the outline: Closure of session, subsection 2.) is also a typical ending feature of a lesson session, thus a Level 1 feature.

The start of a session is harder to identify (in this case it is not even recorded, of course). Usually a closure sequence like the one cited above will also be the transition to a new subject, so that the new session will start immediately. Other transitional devices are fairly long pauses while the teacher looks in his books or writes or draws material on the blackboard. The new session then starts by e.g. the teacher presenting a page from a textbook or a drawing or text on the blackboard, by handing out books to the students or simply with asking questions about another subject. In the Mipom class they had a further session on Practical Hygiene and the qualities of water later that same day, and in that case the teacher wrapped up prior interaction saying *Bien!* ‘Well!’, with a pause of 0.8 seconds, and then says: (*High pitch*) “Qui peut [0.3] (*normal pitch*) nous donner [3.7] qui peut nous donner- [1.2] les qualités- [0.4] d’une eau potable.” (In English: (*High pitch*)“Who can [0.3] (*normal pitch*) give us [3.7] who can give us- [1.2] the qualities- [0.4] of drinking water.”) No further marking of the start of a new session is done, the teacher launches the class directly into the main body of the session with a rehearsal/performance phase.

### **Lower level or subsection markers**

The use of *Bien!* typically serves to end some part of a teacher-student interaction on lower levels. As just noted, this use can translate into a Level 1 transitions as well, with a new session starting right after its use. A similar use is found in turn (177) of the present session, which has an emphatic *Bien!*, ‘Well!’ and a long pause (24 seconds) before the video clip ends. Table 8.1 on the next page shows the use of *Bien!*, ‘Well!’ and *Bon!*, ‘Good!’ as transition points or discourse markers in relation to the sections of the session. As we can see in the table, *Bien!* ‘Well!’ with surrounding pauses are used several times in the session to end sections of different levels. It is thus a quite common way of signaling that one is leaving something behind and goes on to the next item on the agenda. In one case it is coupled with using a very loud voice for the beginning of the next

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	<i>Outline Section</i>	<i>In turn</i>	<i>Transition marker</i>	<i>Next turn</i>	<i>New outline section</i>
A.	1.(d)	(19a)	[0.7] Bien! [2.8]	(19b)	2.
B.	2.(a)i.	(45a)	[0.3] Bien! [2.2]	(45b)	2.(b)
C.	2.(b)i.	(47a)	[0.8] Bien! [0.5]	(47b)	3.
D.	In 3.(b)	(65)	[8.5] Bien! [0.4]	(68)	3.(b) cont.
E.	3.(b)	(76a)	[1.6] Bien! [1.1]	(76b)	3.(c) Loud voice
F.	6.(a)	(159)	[.] Bien! [0.7]Bon,	(159)	6.(b)
G.	6.(b)	(161)	Bon![5.3]Bien![0.6]	(cont.)	6.(c)
H.	6.(c)	(161)	[0.3]Bien! [0.9]	(cont.)	(cont.)
I.	6.(c)	(163)	[0.1] Bien, debout! [0.6]	(164)	Close, 1.
J.	Close 1.(a)	(171a)	[0.1] Bien! [6.5]	(169b)	Close, 2.
K.	Close 2.(b)	(177)	[2.1] Bien! [24.0]	(—)	(end)

Table 8.1: Transition markers in sections of lesson outline

section, see Line E. in Table 8.1, but mostly it goes along simply with a change in theme. Line D. of the table shows use of the marker to wrap up an unplanned-for section of class management, where the teacher had had an outburst at a student who came in 20 minutes late, something which shows its versatility. Lines F.–I. have uses in close collocation with other words such as *Bon* ‘Good!’, and here the marker serves to separate the items of the summing up in the last subsection of the outline’s main body. At this point the teacher was preparing to end the whole session, and used the marker to wrap up different pieces in this process. Transcript 8.2 follows:

### Transcript 8.2 *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, outline 1.(d)–2.*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

(19)

(19)

- a. **Teacher:** 01.38.8 — — Y a beaucoup a. de lieux pour trouver de l’eau. [0.7] Bien! [2.8]
- b. Comment est [0.1] l’eau [0.1] du marigot? [0.6] L’eau du marigot est comment? [2.0] Comment est l’eau du marigot! (*about bk and camera*) Ne regardez-pas ça, re- [0.3] hein? [0.1] Répondez à la question, comment est l’eau du marigot? [0.2] Oumarou? [2.1]

- a. **Teacher:** 01.38.8 — — There are many places for finding water. [0.7] Well! [2.8]
- b. How is [0.1] the water [0.1] of the stream? [0.6] The water of the stream is how? [2.0] How is the water of the stream! (*about bk and camera*) Don’t look at that, lo- [0.3] hm? [0.1] Answer the question, how is the water at the stream? [0.2] Oumarou? [2.1]

Transcript 8.2 on the previous page gives an example of how both internal features such as change of theme and end markers play a role in signaling a shift of sections, in this case the transition between subsections 1. and 2. of the Main body.

Section 1 ending with turn (19a) has been concerned with locations of water, and the teacher ends it with a list, itself a typical ending feature (see 8.2.9 on page 335), and the statement that there are many places where water is found. Then he says *Bien!* and proceeds to ask questions with *comment est* 'how is', starting a new section.

We may also note that while there is a clear division in themes from (19a) to (19b), there is also a certain continuity: The teacher has *marigot*, 'stream', as the last item on his list, and when he starts asking about the qualities of water, 'stream' is the starting point, in a sort of subthematic continuity. A little later, in turn (47a-47b), a higher level continuity is found in the transition between subsection 2.(a) and 2.(b): The stream as a location for dirty water is contrasted to drill holes as locations for clean water. The whole of subsection 2. is thus tying the coming theme of the qualities of clean water to the first theme of where water is located.

The use of *Bien!* here and elsewhere shows that it is an all-purpose end marker that is not tied to any particular lesson phase, it quite generally signals that the interaction has reached some conclusion and now will go on with something else. This means also that it is not very useful for picking out exactly what kind of interaction has been going on and what the next piece will be, as it is not strongly tied to any particular level or type of usage event. The pedagogical phase or topic may also change without this marker, this happens several times in the session.

Other markers are present, such as the loud voice used by the teacher at the beginning of turn (88), which coincides with the transisition from section 3. to section 4. The use of the adjacency pair *C'est compris, non? –Oui, monsieur* has a sectioning effect, as we shall see in 8.2.6 on page 323 where I treat explanatory lecture sequences.

A final comment on the *Bien!* marker concerns its exclusive use by the teacher. It is closely tied to the teacher's status as the moderator of all interaction. No-one else in class has the authority to end pieces of the interaction, and so nobody but the teacher uses this marker in class. The role of the teacher is of course first and foremost institutionally endorsed, but also enters the distribution of roles in the class as a community of practice.

There is a linguistic parallell in this usage pattern in a Fulfulde discourse marker, commonly used by Nizaa-speakers as well. The word *Too!* 'Well! OK!' can be used in a similar way, see 5.2.2. It then has the same constraint on user rights: it would hardly be used by a subordinate person to end some interaction with a superior, though it is frequently used as a rejoinder to orders or requests from superiors.

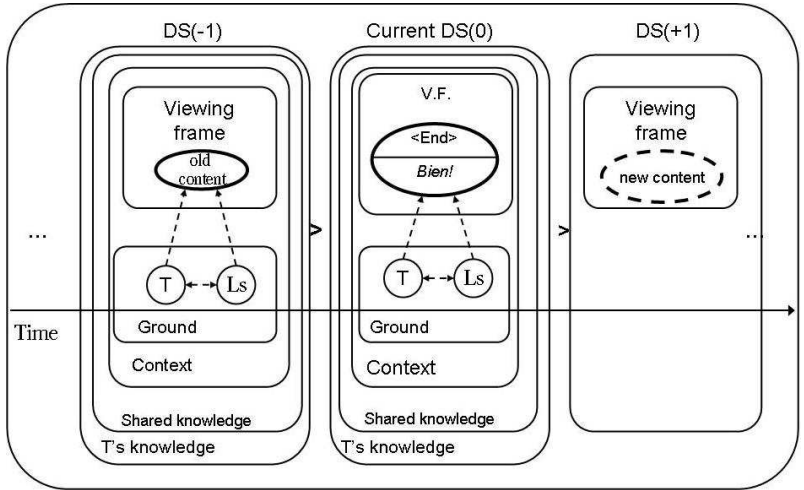


Figure 8.3: Using a discourse marker of ending to finish a teaching sequence, projecting that some new content will be introduced in the next discourse space

***Bien!* ‘Well!’ as a speech genre**

There are reasons to consider a single-word utterance such as *Bien!* ‘Well!’ as a speech genre all by itself. Fig. 8.3 illustrates this idea. It represents the use of a schematic endmarker in teaching interaction. The middle frame, DS(0), of the figure represents the Current Discourse Space where the end marker *Bien!*, ‘Well!’ is used to wrap up the preceding joint attention to the Teacher’s (T’s) knowledge, marked now as ‘Old content’ and represented by the DS(-1). The DS(0) also projects a future Discourse Space DS(+1) where some new content from T’s knowledge will be receive joint attention from T and the Learners, Ls. As noted, there exist other endmarkers in common classroom discourse, which all can can be represented by figures similar to Fig. 8.3.

In the sense of a typical form of an utterance, a discourse marker such as *Bien!*, ‘Well!’ is in itself a speech genre. It has a schematic phonological form of some substance and a corresponding conceptualisation of marking the ‘end’ of the present interactional sequence. It thus has a wider meaning than the bare semantics of the word, and this wider meaning is drawn exactly from its use as an utterance in interaction, with an intentionality of communication that is beyond the dictionary meaning of the word. It is schematic in the sense that there can be intonational and other vocalisational variation on the one hand, and variations in

conceptualisation on the other, concerning exactly what it is that the marker ends in each usage event. To the extent that the students do not share the knowledge of the teacher on the type of interaction going on in DS(-1), it will be difficult to use the endmarker to correctly project the DS(+1). Different teachers may use the word rarely or all the time, making different schemas of its meaning emerge.

While constituting a speech genre all by itself, this endmarker also enters into recurrent alliances with other typical utterance forms, and so can be part of other speech genres as well.

### **8.2.4 Sentence completion and complete sentences**

A commonly used speech genre in most classes I observed was to start a sentence or word and let it hang unfinished to get the class to supply the right target word in a choral response. Such completion techniques were used generally as a feedback for the teacher to check on uptake of target material in the class. However, this genre was less used in Mipom than in certain other classes of the area. Such variation between schools and classes is explained by seeing these as different communities of practice, developing their own communicative repertoire as each group separately engage in 'doing school'.

Completion of unfinished, 'hanging' sentences and occasionally words did happen in Mipom, but usually this was directed to, or taken up by, individual students and not large groups in the class. The lack of choral responses is of course connected not only to ways of 'doing school', but simply to lack of the wanted knowledge. When most of the class have rather hazy ideas of what French word the teacher is after, it gets quite difficult to do a choral response. However, I shall look closer at an exchange where a student gets into trouble not directly from lack of knowledge, but rather from misunderstanding the speech genre.

#### **Mixing speech genres**

Oumarou is one of the bigger SIL students, possibly eight or nine years old. He is seated nearly at the back of class, something which makes his verbal responses somewhat hard to hear, also for the teacher. In the following exchange between Oumarou and the teacher a typical school genre characteristic, the preference for complete sentences, plays an important role. It meshes with the genre of completion in a way that gets Oumarou into trouble: the teacher tries to get him to repeat his already given correct answer using a complete sentence, while Oumarou seems to go for a simple completion of the teacher's sentence. We pick up the thread in turn (19b) from Transcript 8.2 on page 303: the teacher has finished talking about locations of water and here goes on to water quality.



**Transcript 8.3** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, start section 2.(a)*

- | <i>Original:</i>   | <i>English translation:</i>  |
|--|--|
| (19)   | (19)   |
| b. <b>Teacher:</b> 02.21.4 Comment est [0.1] l'eau [0.1] du marigot? [0.6] L'eau du marigot est comment? [2.0] Comment est l'eau du marigot! Ne regardez-pas ça, re- [0.3] Hein? [0.19] Répondez à la question, comment est l'eau du marigot? [0.2] Oumarou? [2.1] | b. <b>Teacher:</b> 02.21.4 How is [0.1] the water [0.1] of the stream? [0.6] The water of the stream is how? [2.0] How is the water of the stream! Don't look at that, lo- [0.3] Hm? [0.1] Answer the question, how is the water at the stream? [0.2] Oumarou? [2.1] |
| (20) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.35.9 ( <i>sits</i> ) Sale.   | (20) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.35.9 ( <i>sits</i> ) Dirty.  |

The teacher starts out with presenting the question to the class at large, with his common multiple posing of a question. As he had done before in this session, he abruptly commands them not to look at the camera, as if it is this that keeps them from responding. Then he decides to ask Oumarou specifically. Oumarou responds with a single word only and without standing up, something which immediately gets the teacher to react: it is not the correct way to answer a question (see 7.3 on page 260). Then he asks the same question again:

**Transcript 8.4** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, from 2.(a)*

- | <i>Original:</i>   | <i>English translation:</i>  |
|--|--|
| (21) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.36.8 Lève toi! ( <i>Oumarou stands up</i> ) [2.0] Comment est l'eau du marigot? ( <i>goes halfway down the aisle</i> ) [1.5] | (21) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.36.8 Stand up! ( <i>Oumarou stands up</i> ) [2.0] How is the water of the stream? ( <i>goes halfway down the aisle</i> ) [1.5] |
| (22) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.41.1 ( <i>looks away to his left, smiles</i> ) Sale. [0.4]   | (22) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.41.1 ( <i>looks away to his left, smiles</i> ) Dirty. [0.4]  |
| (23) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.42.0 Hein? [0.3]   | (23) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.42.0 Hm? [0.3]   |
| (24) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.42.7 ( <i>turning more forward</i> ) Sale. [1.2]   | (24) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.42.7 ( <i>turning more forward</i> ) Dirty. [1.2]  |
| (25) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.44.4 ( <i>harshly</i> ) Parle à haute voix! [0.8] L'eau du marigot est- [0.6]  | (25) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.44.4 ( <i>harshly</i> ) Speak up! [0.8] The water of the stream is- [0.6]  |
| (26) <b>Oumarou:</b> 0.2.47.8 ( <i>looks down</i> ) Sale [0.3] ( <i>glances up at teacher</i> )  | (26) <b>Oumarou:</b> 0.2.47.8 ( <i>looks down</i> ) Dirty. [0.3] ( <i>glances up at teacher</i> )  |

Oumarou now standing is not comfortable with the required format of student behaviour in such circumstances, which decrees standing straight, looking directly

at the teacher and speaking in a loud, or at least clear, voice, see 7.3.1 on page 263 and following page. Though he does stand straight, he prefers to look all other places than directly at the teacher as he delivers his correct answer. He also speaks rather softly, and the teacher, even being halfway down the aisle, tells him to speak up. Then he models the target sentence and leaves it open-ended as if to be completed by Oumarou. He does so, again rather low-voiced and with a quick glance at the teacher to see his reaction. But the teacher is not satisfied with this, it seems he already has a complete sentence rather than a single word in mind.

**Transcript 8.5** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, from 2.(a)*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (27) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.48.6 Repète! [1.4] L'eau du marigot est- [0.3]  | (27) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.48.6 Repeat! [1.4] The water of the stream is- [0.3]  |
| (28) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.51.8 ( <i>looks forward, glances at camera</i> ) Sale. [0.2]  | (28) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.51.8 ( <i>looks forward, glances at camera</i> ) Dirty. [0.2]   |
| (29) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.52.4 ( <i>stronger; with hand beat</i> ) Repète, ( <i>overlapping talk forward in class, teacher does not react to it</i> ) l'eau du marigot est- | (29) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.52.4 ( <i>stronger; with hand beat</i> ) Repeat, ( <i>overlapping talk forward in class, teacher does not react to it</i> ) the water of the stream is- |
| (30) <b>Somebody forward:</b> 02.54.3 =L'eau du mari-   | (30) <b>Somebody forward:</b> 02.54.3 =The water of the stre-   |
| (31) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.55.5 L'eau du marigot est- [0.7]  | (31) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.55.5 The water of the stream is- [0.7]  |
| (32) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.57.9 -est comment alors? [0.1]  | (32) <b>Teacher:</b> 02.57.9 -is how then? [0.1]  |
| (33) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.58.7 ( <i>looks around</i> ) Sale. ( <i>glances at teacher</i> ) [1.4]  | (33) <b>Oumarou:</b> 02.58.7 ( <i>looks around</i> ) Dirty. ( <i>glances at teacher</i> ) [1.4]   |
| (34) <b>Issa:</b> 03.02.9 ( <i>stands up besides Oumarou</i> ) L'eau du marigot est sale. [0.2]   | (34) <b>Issa:</b> 03.02.9 ( <i>stands up besides Oumarou</i> ) The water of the stream is dirty. [0.2]  |

In turn (27) the teacher tells Oumarou to repeat, and starts off the sentence he wants him to say, but still letting it hang incompleting. Oumarou seems to take his cue from the incomplete sentence rather than the repeat order, mixing the genres of sentence completion and imitation of modeled language. He does not repeat the whole sentence, only the single word, turn (28). The teacher is not satisfied and tells him again to repeat, again both modeling the sentence and then letting it hang unfinished.

Others in class have begun to pick up what the teacher wants now, and somebody forward behind the teacher's back, is imitating the modeled sentence.

Maybe Oumarou picks up the idea from them, because in turn (31) he does repeat the teacher's modeled phrase. He is not able to finish, though, and put his word into the open slot of the sentence. Letting his own sentence hang for 0.7 sec. he invites the teacher back in to repeat his question, this time without letting it hang, and Oumarou is back to supplying the single word.

Finally another boy sitting beside Oumarou gets him out of his ordeal. He stands up and says the complete sentence, turn (34), and the teacher accepts it, and repeats it as a complete sentence, hanging a bit on the words as if he still would want somebody to complete it for him, see turn (35) in Transcript 8.6 on page 311.

These sequences illustrate how differing conceptualisations of the speech genres operative in the interaction can lead to misunderstanding and frustration for both teacher and students.

### **Completion in a speech genre-perspective**

It is perhaps not obvious how completion techniques can be said to be a speech genre. Clearly the class must be able to guess what the teacher is after, and they must know it well enough by heart to fill in the rest of the phrase. As the sentences or words to be completed change constantly, and so carry few commonalities, it is hardly plausible to claim that they will form any particular schema by themselves, beyond being learnt as target texts. Still the phenomenon of completion itself is recurrent and has certain forms.

The most obvious formal characteristic of the proposed schema is the intonation pattern signaling 'unfinished' together with the non-production of the final part of the item. These two involve the vocalisation channels of segmental content and intonation.

Certain conceptualisation channels belong with these two vocalisation channels. The hanging item is construed as 'known information' by its very use as unfinished, because it presupposes that the class knows the whole item. On the speech management level, the hanging sentence projects a completion response from the class. The teacher and the class must also have shared knowledge of previous interaction in order to succeed in a completion sequence.

It is quite possible to extract a schematic symbolic structure from pairing up the vocalisation and conceptualisation channels noted and quite likely that such a schema will become entrenched in the students after some time of use; and Oumarou uses this pattern in Transcripts 8.3 and 8.5. His problem comes from failing to recognise that the teacher was after other things as well: what he wanted was a complete sentence repeated back to him from Oumarou. It is no wonder that Oumarou fails however: the teacher consistently uses the vocalisation of the completion genre together with markers of other genres such modeling and

imitation (cfr. the use of *Repetez!* ‘Repeat!’) thus projecting clashing discourse expectations.

### 8.2.5 Eliciting text

In accordance with the ‘New Pedagogical Approach’, teachers generally always try to elicit the lesson’s content from the students, instead of lecturing about it themselves. This works in some cases, but not always. Sequences such as the one found in Transcript 8.14 on page 324 shows that teachers do give out information and explanations when the wanted knowledge is impossible to extract from their class. But this is a two-edged sword for the class. While they may learn new things from what the teacher tells them, such informative mini-lectures will also provide the teacher with a basis for telling off the class. If they cannot give the information back to him in rehearsal sequences, he will accuse them of not having paid attention, of having forgotten things, and of being lazy and stupid.

In fact, in their extensive use of questions, the teachers illustrate rather graphically the negative image of the ‘traditional lesson’ as described by much pedagogical literature. They use “questions [that] are ... “inauthentic” ... simply testing student knowledge, ... or [they are] co-opting students to participate in what would otherwise be a lecture—transforming a monologue into a dialogue by eliciting short items of information at self-chosen points,” as Cazden (2001, 46) puts it. What I want to focus on here goes beyond the simple recognition of teaching style as ‘traditional’, however. I bring my own questions to the data: How is this co-opting brought about, what speech genres are utterances cast in, and how do these typical forms shape talk in the classroom?

One factor clearly shaping talk is the preconceived plan the teacher normally has made for each lesson. Teachers are trained to define clear learning goals and make detailed session plans in a *fiche de préparation* ‘preparation sheet’ when preparing lessons. They will write up quite specific plans for how to introduce and develop a subject, with time allotment for each part.

In many cases this translates into preparing a *text* which they aim to present in class, one way or another. The next step is to have the class learn the text well enough to reproduce it correctly when asked directly, or when prompted by an unfinished word or sentence. The sentences of the planned text are complete and often sequentially ordered. This unfortunately means that a correct answer misplaced in relation to the teacher’s preconceived plan of the session may receive negative evaluations. The same may happen to a student’s answer that has correct content, but is formally lacking in some way.

The teacher’s plan is never made known to the students at the setout of a lesson. Actually the teacher does not even tell them the name of the subject they are to study in each session, they are supposed to be able to identify this themselves at

the end (see 7.2.2 on page 251).

### Fishing in murky waters

Going on from Issa's formally correct answer in turn (34) in the preceding transcript, the teacher does not spend any time evaluating it positively, he has other important words to elicit. After casting about a bit, he finds a way of doing it.

#### Transcript 8.6 *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, from 2.(a)*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>(35) <b>Teacher:</b> 03.02.9 L'eau du marigot<br/>(<i>Issa sits down, Oumarou also</i>) eeest-<br/>[0.4] sssss- [0.3] est sale. [0.4] Hein?<br/>[0.5] L'eau du marigot est sale, oui, ce<br/>n'est, oui, ce- ce- c'eeest, c'est sale!<br/>[0.5] Oui- [0.3] Qui peut dire encore<br/>autre chose, l'eau du marigot n'est<br/>pas- [1.1] (<i>Louder, higher pitch</i>) Est-<br/>ce que l'eau du marigot est propre?<br/>[0.7]</p> <p>(36) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 03.20.4 (<i>very low voice</i>)<br/>C'est sale. (<i>lifts hand</i>)</p> <p>(37) <b>Teacher:</b> 03.20.8 =Hein? [0.7] (<i>to</i><br/><i>Yacoubou</i>) Oui. [0.4]</p> <p>(38) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 03.22.6 (<i>halfstands</i>) Non.<br/>(<i>sits down</i>) [0.5]</p> <p>(39) <b>Teacher:</b> 03.23.6 Hein? [0.2]</p> <p>(40) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 03.24.1 (<i>sitting</i>) Non.</p> | <p>(35) <b>Teacher:</b> 03.02.9 The water of the<br/>stream (<i>Issa sits down, Oumarou</i><br/><i>also</i>) iiis- [0.4] dddd - [0.3] is dirty.<br/>[0.4] Hm? [0.5] The water of the<br/>stream is dirty, yes, it isn't, yes, it-<br/>it- it iiis, it is dirty! [0.5] Yes- [0.3]<br/>Who may say something else again,<br/>the water of the stream isn't- [1.1]<br/>(<i>Louder, higher pitch</i>) Is the water of<br/>the stream clean? [0.7]</p> <p>(36) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 03.20.4 (<i>very low voice</i>)<br/>It is dirty. (<i>lifts hand</i>)</p> <p>(37) <b>Teacher:</b> 03.20.8 Hm? [0.7] (<i>to</i><br/><i>Yacoubou</i>) Yes. [0.4]</p> <p>(38) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 03.22.6 (<i>halfstands</i>) No.<br/>(<i>sits down</i>) [0.5]</p> <p>(39) <b>Teacher:</b> 03.23.6 Hm? [0.2]</p> <p>(40) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 03.24.1 (<i>sitting</i>) No.</p> |
|---|--|

In turn (35) the teacher first repeats that stream water is dirty, in a strangely hesitant manner as if he is not really content with this word, or rather is looking for a way to get beyond this stage without being certain about how. Then he goes directly on to elicit the next quality-of-water word. He asks for 'something else' and makes an unfinished hanging sentence again: *l'eau du marigot n'est pas – [1.1]* 'the stream water isn't –', fishing for *propre* 'clean'. He frames this as an occasion for someone to step forward as a competent student: *Qui peut dire encore autre chose ...* 'Who can say yet another thing?' But nobody reacts to the pause and he rephrases to a question practically giving away the answer: *Est-ce que l'eau du marigot est propre?* 'Is stream water clean?' He thus uses two different techniques for eliciting wanted information from the class: completing

an unfinished sentence and a leading yes/no question. For both of these to work, the word *propre* ‘clean’ must be well enough known in class for somebody to be able to connect it to the teacher’s use of it in relation to stream water.

Yacoubou does seem to make the connection, but responds first by talking without waiting for recognition, as if to himself, and his comment repeats what was just said : *C’est sale*. ‘It’s dirty.’ He seems to put together this idea from an active understanding of the ongoing discussion and lifts his hand only afterwards.<sup>6</sup> But maybe the teacher does not even hear this, in any case he repeats his question by saying *Hein?* and then recognises Yacoubou’s lifted hand, who this time answers simply ‘No.’ He does not expand on the subject: either he has not caught the target word ‘propre’, or he has problems with constructing the negative clause required by an expanded answer, (*Non, ce n’est pas propre*. ‘No, it isn’t clean.’). Or maybe he is simply uncomfortable with the complete sentence format used in a polarity question answer. At the teacher’s second *Hein?*, he repeats his answer again, without bothering to stand up. But the teacher does want a more specific answer, as we see in the next excerpt:

**Transcript 8.7** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, from 2.(a)*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(41) <b>Teacher:</b> 03.24.6 On, on dit comment. [1.4] Formez des phrases. L’eau (<i>Yacoubou stands up</i>) du marigot n’est-</p> | <p>(41) <b>Teacher:</b> 03.24.6 One, one say that how. [1.4] Form sentences. The water (<i>Yacoubou stands up</i>) of the stream isn’t-</p> |
| <p>(42) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 03.29.1 (<i>standing</i>) =L’eau du marigot n’est pas- [1.0]</p>   | <p>(42) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 3.29.1 (<i>standing</i>) =The water of the stream isn’t- [1.0]</p>   |
| <p>(43) <b>Teacher:</b> 03.31.5 -n’est pas- [0.1]</p>   | <p>(43) <b>Teacher:</b> 03.31.5 -isn’t- [0.1]</p>   |
| <p>(44) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 03.32.3 (<i>fairly low</i>) salé(?) (<i>smiles, Iila at his side looks strangely at him</i>)</p>             | <p>(44) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 03.32.3 (<i>fairly low</i>) salty(?) (<i>smiles, Iila at his side looks strangely at him</i>)</p>                  |

<sup>6</sup>We may note here that the French word *sale* probably is fairly well known, and *saleté* ‘dirt, impurity’ has become a household word when speaking of particles in water or rubble in the yard, even for people who hardly know French at all.

- | <i>Original:</i>  | <i>English translation:</i>  |
|---|--|
| (45)  | (45)   |
| a. <b>Teacher:</b> 03.33.4 N'est pas clair! a. <i>(Yacoubou sits down, bows forward a moment, still smirking)</i> N'est pas propre. Très bien! [0.2] L'eau du marigot n'est pas- <i>(Iila and Yacoubou smiles at each other)</i> [0.5] claire, comme vous dites,[0.4] l'eau du marigot- [0.1] n'est pas propre. [0.3] Bien! [2.2] | <b>Teacher:</b> 03.33.4 Isn't clear! <i>(Yacoubou sits down, bows forward a moment, still smirking)</i> Isn't clean. Very good! [0.2] The water of the stream is not <i>(Iila and Yacoubou smiles at each other)</i> [0.5] clear, as you say,[0.4] the water of the stream- [0.1] isn't clean. [0.3] Well! [2.2] |

In turn (41) the teacher aims to bring forward his next chosen target word of the lesson, *propre*, 'clean', but he also brings in the verbal form of the answer as relevant: *—On, on dit comment. [1.4] Formez des phrases. 'We, we say that how. Form sentences.'* Then he makes a hanging sentence, modeling most of the negative sentence he wants to elicit. Yacoubou repeats, but gets stuck on the final target word. The teacher models again the last part of his incompleted sentence, and this time Yacoubou comes up with something that sounds enough like *claire* 'clear' for the teacher to acknowledge it. He can finally finish this part of the session after having established that stream water is dirty, not clean and not clear. From the little wordless interaction between Yacoubou and Iila beside him, we can maybe infer that some luck was involved in Yacoubou's making a good answer in his last turn.<sup>7</sup>

In any case, the teacher has got something he can go on from, and ends turn (45a) with *Bien!* 'Well!' signaling a shift in theme. In the next couple of turns ((45b-47a), see appendix), he asks where to find clean, clear water. Yacoubou answers again, using the word *forage* 'drill hole' with success, for the second time in this session. The teacher evaluates it as a good answer and writes it on the blackboard. Again he finishes with *Bien!* 'Well!', marking the end of the present subsection of the session.

### Presentation by elicitation: Outline subsection 3

The teacher now has connected the 'location of water'-theme with the new 'quality of water'-theme and is ready for the next phase of the lesson: presentation of qualities of water by elicitation. Whether the students have been able to make the

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<sup>7</sup>Yacoubou's answer is heard to hear, but he may actually be saying *salé* 'salty'. It is of course true that river water is not salty, but it is hardly the answer the teacher was after. Teachers reacted sometimes harshly to anomalous answers, while at other times they could partly acknowledge them with a 'Yes, but...' retribution.

same connection is an open question; the *Bien!* endmarker is not used uniquely for such major sectionings of a lesson.

In the session I am analysing here, subsection 3 is a core elicitation sequence of new material, coming after the rehearsal of old material in subsection 1 and the transition phase in subsection 2. The lead question of the teacher is *L'eau claire/propres est comment?* 'How is clear/clean water?', in turn (47b).

**Transcript 8.8** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, start of outline section 3.*

*Original:*

- (47) b. **Teacher:** L'eau [0.3] claire peut être comment. [2.4] hn? [0.6] L'eau claire peut être comment? [1.8] L'eau claire est comment? Quand v- L'eau propre est comment? [1.4] Hein?
- (48) **Iila:** 04.26.4 Nn- elle est 'ncolore. [0.4]
- (49) **Teacher:** 04.28.5 Hein? [0.3]
- (50) **Iila:** 04.29.2 N-colore [0.5]
- (51) **Teacher:** 04.30.5 Non. [1.0] C'est n'est pas [0.3] 'colore'. [1.2]
- (52) **Somebody** 04.33.9 (*low voice*) Claire. [0.4]
- (53) **Teacher:** 04.34.8 Qui dit mieux? [1.0]
- (54) **Somebody forward:** 04.35.6 (*low voice*) Claire [1.6]
- (55) **Teacher:** 04.38.9 L'eau propre eest- [0.2] comment. [0.3] Est-ce que ça a [0.2] a des couleurs? [0.3] L'eau propre, l'eau claire là, a des couleurs?
- (56) **Students:** 04.45.4 (*two or three*) Non=Non.
- (57) **Teacher:** 04.46.6 Hein? [0.3]
- (58) **Students:** 04.47.2 (*several*) Non!

*English Translation:*

- (47) b. **Teacher:** Clear [0.3] water may be in what way. [2.4] hn? [0.6] Clean water may be how? [1.8] Clean water is how? When y- Clean water is how? [1.4] Hm?
- (48) **Iila:** 04.26.4 Nn- It is 'ncolored. [0.4]
- (49) **Teacher:** 04.28.5 Hm? [0.3]
- (50) **Iila:** 04.29.2 N-coloured. [0.5]
- (51) **Teacher:** 04.30.5 No. [1.0] It isn't [0.3] 'coloured'. [1.2]
- (52) **Somebody:** 04.33.9 (*low voice*) Clear. [0.4]
- (53) **Teacher:** 04.34.8 Who says better? [1.0]
- (54) **Somebody forward:** 04.36.5 (*low voice*) Clear. [1.6]
- (55) **Teacher:** 04.38.9 Clean water iis- [0.2] in what way. [0.3] Does that have [0.2] have colours? [0.3] Clean water, that clear water, does it have colours?
- (56) **Students:** 04.45.4 (*two or three*) No=No.
- (57) **Teacher:** 04.46.6 Hm? [0.3]
- (58) **Students:** 04.47.2 (*several*) No!



The teacher does not accept Lila's proposal of *incolore* in turn (48), and in fact Lila is not clearly pronouncing any vowel at the onset of the word. Anyway, the teacher most probably does not hear the rather low-voiced answer properly, not even when he gets Lila to repeat it. He hears it as *colore* 'coloured' instead, and as is often the case at such occasions, the student is not given any credit for what may be right in his proposal, just a global negative evaluation.

In turn (51) he uses another common teacher strategy when somebody has given an incorrect answer, he asks: *Qui dit mieux?* 'Who can say it better?' In this way he invites the other students to act as competent participants or language experts, something which is supposed to be motivating for the students (Moore 2004). It brings in an element of competition.

At least two different students audibly say *claire* 'clear' during this interaction, but without the trappings of lifting hand, getting acknowledged and standing up to say it. These proposals of something which has just been talked about as a quality of clean drill hole water are thus not properly inserted in classroom talk and the teacher ignores them.

The teacher now repeats the question and then changes it to a yes/no-question, asking if clean, clear water has colours. His use of the phrase *l'eau claire-là* 'that clear water' is a common Cameroonian French way of marking something as known, already talked about, information. At least some in class are able to use the cue given, again in a polarity question: they answer 'No!', turn (56), in the only instance approaching a chorus response in this whole session, though it is a far cry from being a response from the entire class.

The questioning continues, the teacher wanting to know *how* one says that it does not have any colours.

**Transcript 8.9** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, outline subsection 3., cont.*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (59) <b>Teacher:</b> 04.47.7 Quand ça n'a pas de couleurs, on dit comment? [2.1] Quand ça n'a pas de couleurs, on dit que c'est comment? [1.1] C'est-[.] oui, Ahmadou? [0.3] | (59) <b>Teacher:</b> 04.47.7 When it doesn't have any colours, how do we say that? [2.1] When it doesn't have any colours, we say that is how? [1.1] It is-[.] Yes, Ahmadou? [0.3] |
| (60) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 04.55.9 Claire. [0.7] C'est-  | (60) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 04.55.9 Clear. [0.7] It is-   |
| (61) <b>Teacher:</b> 04.57.4 =C'e-   | (61) <b>Teacher:</b> =It i-  |
| (62) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 04.57.6 ( <i>almost inaudible</i> ) =claire.  | (62) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 04.57.6 ( <i>almost inaudible</i> ) =clear-   |

*Original:**English translation:*

- (63) **Teacher:** 04.58.4 Oui, c'est claire mais- [0.5] quand, [0.2] Oui, on dit encore autre chose que- comment. [0.6] On dit encore d'une autre manière comment? [2.0] Quand ça n'a pas de couleurs, [0.3] on dit que c'est iin- [2.3] (*to Iila, sitting with hand lifted*) Oui. [1.2]

It is not clear from the video whether Ahmadou gave one of the earlier unofficial instances of 'clear', but he now does a proper job of getting a turn of public classroom talk. Ahmadou tries to use the word 'clear' as an answer to the teacher's question; it is after all a recently acknowledged 'water word'. He first says the word, and then after a pause of 0.7 sec. does a self repair to insert it in a complete sentence, as has already been repeatedly required by the teacher. Though Ahmadou's proposal is properly inserted and formally acceptable, he gets only a 'Yes, but...' answer from the teacher. It shows that Ahmadou and the other students are not following the teacher when he tries to elicit new information about clean water, instead they put forward something already said, as in a rehearsal sequence.

The teacher in turn (63) continues his elicitation efforts, using *encore autre chose ... encore d'une autre manière* 'yet another thing ... in yet another way' to draw attention to the fact that he does not want just recent words repeated back to him now, but new items. Then he asks about not having colours again, and models the start of the word he wants, *c'est iin-* 'it is uun-'. This is what Iila needs to get his proposal from turns (48) and (50) in working order.

**Transcript 8.10** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, outline 3. cont.*

*Original:**English Translation:*

- (64) **Iila:** 05.14.0 (*stands up*) Incolore [0.1] (64) **Iila:** 05.14.0 (*stands up*) Uncolored. [0.1]
- (65) (65)
- a. **Teacher:** 05.15.3 Incolore, très bien! [0.9] On dit que-hn [0.7] L'eau- [0.7] propre est incolore, [. ] claire, n'est-ce pas, incolore, très bien. [0.5] Incolore, c'est à dire, ça n'a pas des couleurs. [1.2] a. **Teacher:** 05.15.3 Uncoloured, very good! [0.9] We say that- hn [0.7] Clean- [0.7] water is uncoloured, [. ] clear, isn't it, uncoloured, very good. [0.5] Uncoloured, that means, it doesn't have any colours. [1.2]

This time Iila says the correct word loud and clear, guessing that what the teacher intends from the given syllable. He is awarded with a *Tres bien!* and the teacher

repeats the fact that clean water is uncoloured a couple of times. He also repeats that *incolore* means that it has no colours.

It seems clear that most of the students missed the teacher's change to an elicitation sequence from the former rehearsal sequence. The use of an endmarker is not enough, and no other overt marker is used by the teacher. Iila does follow him, though, and proposes (unsuccessfully) a new 'water quality' of 'uncoloured' in turn (48). Others try 'clear' again, but the teacher does not accept it enthusiastically any longer, as he did in turn (45a). He wants 'yet another thing' but this does not seem to be a well-known way to mark new material to be elicited. Iila has already caught on to the shift, however, and finally manages to get his proposal right.

### Eliciting an unknown word

The teacher next makes a pause of 1.2 seconds before he barges ahead with his next target word of *sans saveur* 'without taste' in the second half of turn (65).

**Transcript 8.11** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, outline 3. cont.*

*Original:*

*English Translation:*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (65)<br>b. Est-ce que l'eau propre- [1.1] a le<br>gout. [0.5] Hein? [0.3] C'est sucré?<br>[1.0] C'est- [0.4] sucré, c'est comme<br>le gaari? [1.9] C'est comment? [0.3]<br>On lève le doigt, ne repondez pas<br>comme ça, on lève d'abord le doigt.<br>[0.2] L'eau- propr-e [1.0] n'a pas- le<br>gout, n'est-ce pas? | (65)<br>b. Does clean water- [1.1] have any<br>taste. [0.5] Hm? [0.3] Is it sweet?<br>[1.0] It is- [0.4] sweet, it is like the<br>gaari? [1.9] How is it? [0.3] You raise<br>your hand, don't answer like that, you<br>raise your hand first. [0.2] Clean-<br>water- [1.0] doesn't have- taste, al-<br>right? |
| (66) <b>Students:</b> 05.47.3 ( <i>low voices</i> ) Oui. [0.2]   | (66) <b>Students:</b> 05.47.3 ( <i>low voices</i> ) Yes. [0.2]  |

The teacher now goes straight ahead with a polarity question *Est-ce que l'eau propre a le gout*. 'Does clean water have any taste,' to elicit the next item. The students agree that clean water does not have any taste, but this is not really informative and the teacher goes on to get the right expression, repeating his explanation that clean water is not sugary like the *gaari*, which is the most common breakfast meal in the village.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>'Gaari' is a fairly liquid mush made of cornmeal mixed with lightly roasted ground peanuts, and usually sweetened with sugar.

**Transcript 8.12** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, outline 3. cont.**Original:*

- (67)
- a. **Teacher:** 05.48.2 Ça n'a pas le gout, on dit comment que ça- [0.1] C'est comment [0.4] quand ça n'a pas le gout. [1.4] L'eau là . [0.2] L'eau propre là , [0.3] n'a pas le gout. [0.2] Quand vous buvez, ce n'est pas comme du sucre. [0.3] Ce n'est pas comme le gaari, [0.1] de la bouillie que vous buvez. [0.3] C'est- [0.4] simplement comme ça. [1.4] Hein? [0.6]
- b. 06.08.1 — —(scolds Yaya who comes in 20 min. late)
- (70) **Teacher:** 06.29.8 Bien! [0.4] On dit que l'eau- [1.6] L'eau [1.1] claire [0.8] ça n'a pas le gout. [0.2] Quand ça n'a pas le gout, on dit que c'est comment? [0.8]
- (71) **Somebody:** 06.40.3 (*inaudible*) [0.8]
- (72) **Teacher:** 06.41.4 Hmm? [0.5] Ne regardez pas ça, [0.2] repondez d'abord à la question. [0.2] On dit que c'est comment? Sans- [1.5]
- (73) **Students:** 06.49.8 (*several inaudible answers*)
- (74) **Teacher:** 06.52.9 Oui, ce n'est pas sucré, c'est- on dit que c'est comment alors, quand c'- c'- donc ça veut dire que ça n'a pas le gout [0.2], on dit que c'est comment, on av- on avait dit ça, non?
- (75) **Somebody:** 07.00.4 Oui.

*English Translation:*

- (67)
- a. **Teacher:** 05.48.2 It doesn't have taste, we say how that it- [0.1] It is how [0.4] when it doesn't have any taste. [1.4] That water. [0.2] That clean water, [0.3] it doesn't have taste. [0.2] When you drink, it isn't like sugary. [0.3] It isn't like the gaari, [0.1] the mush that you drink. [0.3] It is- [0.4] simply like that. [1.4] Hm? [0.6]
- b. 06.08.1 — — (scolds Yaya who comes in 20 min. late)
- (70) **Teacher:** 06.29.8 Well! [0.4] We say that water- [1.6] the clear [1.1] water [0.8] doesn't have a taste. [0.2] When it doesn't have taste, how do we say that it is? [0.8]
- (71) **Somebody:** 06.40.3 (*inaudible*) [0.8]
- (72) **Teacher:** 06.41.4 Hmm? [0.5] Don't look at that, [0.2] answer rather the question. [0.2] We say that it is how? Without- [1.5]
- (73) **Students:** 06.49.8 (*several inaudible answers*)
- (74) **Teacher:** 06.52.9 Yes, it isn't sweet, it is- we say then that it is how, when it- it- so that means that it doesn't have a taste [0.2], we say that it is how, we ha- we have said that, no?
- (75) **Somebody:** 07.00.4 Yes.

The teacher uses the endmarker *Bien!* 'Well!' in turn (70) to finish his scolding of Yaya who comes back way too late after the mid-morning pause. After this interruption, the teacher continues his elicitation efforts. He tries the completion

trick again in turn (72), giving them the first word of the two-word expression, and he does get some responses, but apparently not what he wants. The responders seem to put his explanation sentence back to him, saying that water is *sans sucre, pas sucrée* ‘without sugar; not sugary’. He finishes by claiming that the target expression has been mentioned before, using a tag question to elicit agreement with this idea, and gets one positive response. As we shall see in the next session, such questions cannot be expected to get truthful answers. Both in turn (72) and in (76) below the teacher tries to blame a supposed preoccupation with the presence of the camera for the students’ slowness.

Finally he has to give in, but with an interesting interlude first in turn (77-78a), when somebody does come up with a new quality of water, only not at the right place.

**Transcript 8.13** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, outline 3. cont.*

*Original:*

(76) **Teacher:** 07.01.3 Vous ne re- ne-ne-  
neee [2.0]

(77) **Somebody in back:** 07.05.4 Ça ne  
sent pas.

(78)

a. **Teacher:** 07.06.1 Non. Pas ça. [0.1]  
Ça n’a pas le gout d’abord. [0.9]  
Tu vois à la bouche ce n’est pas  
sucré. [0.4] Tu vois que c’eeest-  
[1.3] ce n’est pas-[0.6] bon, [0.2]  
hein? Ce n’est pas agréable. [0.1]  
On dit que-[0.8] c’est comment alors?  
[1.4] Tu vois, ça n’a pas de gout-  
là [0.7] l’eau claire-là n’a pas de  
gout [0.7] Hein? [0.2] on dit que  
c’est comment? [4.6] Sans saveur!  
On avait dit ça, non? [0.9] Donc  
l’eau clair-e est sans saveur. (*writes  
on blackboard*) Hein? Sans saveur.  
[0.5] C’est à dir-e, ça n’a pas de gout,  
saveur. [1.6] Bien! [1.1]

*English Translation:*

(76) **Teacher:** 07.01.3 You don’t lo- don-  
don- don’t [2.0]

(77) **Somebody in back:** 07.05.4 It  
doesn’t smell.

(78)

a. **Teacher:** 07.06.1 No. Not that. [0.1]  
It hasn’t any taste first. [0.9] You  
see in the mouth it isn’t sweet. [0.4]  
You see that it iiis- [1.3] it isn’t- [0.6]  
good, [0.2] hm? It isn’t pleasant.  
[0.1] We say that-[0.8] it is how then?  
[1.4] You see, it hasn’t any taste-  
[0.7] clear water hasn’t any taste [0.7]  
Hm? [0.2] We say that it is how?  
[4.6] Without flavour! We said that,  
no? [0.9] Clear water then is without  
flavour. (*writes on blackboard*) Hm?  
Without flavour. [0.5] That means, it  
doesn’t have any taste, flavour. [1.6]  
Well! [1.1]

A quite revealing exchange of how teacher plans sometimes clash with student understanding takes place here. Some student (Oumarou?) proposes that clean water does not smell, which is in fact the next item on the teacher’s list. But the

teacher immediately quells him. It is not the right place for bringing this forward, they must finish *sans saveur* ‘tasteless’ first. He repeats his hints for ‘tasteless’, to no avail, and finally after a long pause of nearly 5 seconds, he says the words, immediately also repeating that they have heard them before. He proceeds to write on the blackboard, and finishes this item with *Bien!* surrounded by pauses.

And then he goes on to ask in a very loud voice if clean water smells, in turn (78b) below. The loud voice marks both the coming utterances as belonging to a new topic and harks back to the preceding exchange with the student sitting in the back of class, as if the teacher wants to emphasise that now the time for this topic has come.

As with *sans saveur* ‘tasteless’, the teacher is not able to elicit the word for not smelling, *inodore* ‘inodorous’, and in turn (86) he gives them the term and writes it on the blackboard. Having presented, one way or another, all the words on his list, he changes tack to another way of talking about target material, as will be discussed in the next section.

*Original:*

*English Translation:*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(78)</p> <p>b. (very loud voice) Est-ce que l'eau b. [0.3] propre-là , ça sent? [0.7] L'eau propre sent? (rough voice, to a girl on sec. row in SIL) Hey!! Taisez-vous! [0.5] (smacks lips) Gardez-moi ça, vite! (she puts something on floor) [2.7] (normal voice) L'eau [0.3] propre [1.2] - l'eau propre sent? (Oumarou lifts hand) [1.0] Oui. [0.8]</p> | <p>(78)</p> <p>(very loud voice) Does that clean [0.3] water there, smell? [0.7] Does clean water smell? (rough voice, to a girl on sec. row in SIL) Hey!! Be quiet you! [0.5] (smacks lips) Put that away, quick! (she puts something on floor) [2.7] (normal voice) Clean [0.3] water [1.2] - does clean water smell? (Oumarou lifts hand) [1.0] Yes. [0.8]</p> |
|--|---|

## 8.2.6 Lecturing and explaining speech genres

As we have seen in the preceding sections, teachers do sometimes give ‘minilectures’ and some explanation of material as they go along, besides the definitional sentences which makes up the text to learn. Some phrases are frequently used to introduce or set off such pieces from other talk. A list of these expressions as used in the present session include:

- Connecting to Fulfulde or local words or customs, tagged with *que vous dites/appellez là ; que vous buvez/faîtes là* ‘that you use to say/call, that you use to drink/do’, see e.g. turn (17), (19a), (135)
- Comparisons, positive and negative, introduced by *comme, pas comme*, e.g. in turns (65b, 67) *comme le gaari, pas comme du sucre* ‘like the gaari, not like sugar’.

- Equivalent meanings introduced by *c'est à dire, ça veut dire*, when giving another French expression for target words, e.g. in turn (86)
- Explicative gestures accompanying verbal explanations as when the teacher both says and acts out bringing something in your cupped hand up to your nose to smell it, turn (82), introduced by *comme ça, comme ça là* 'like this, like this way'.

These expressions and ways of introducing other material than the target text itself will over time become speech genres with the function of introducing material meant to *explain* the target text. Using the Viewing frame model as shown in Figs. 8.4 and 8.5 on the next page, we see that the introductory function will be the most salient conceptualisation of these expressions, and part of the 'Objective Situation' channel.

However, teachers usually have quite explicit learning goals for lessons, with quite explicit texts to be learned. These must not be mixed with the explanatory material. Therefore another conceptualisation is likely to become entrenched with these expressions as well. As the teacher consistently refuses to have explanatory material quoted back to him and keeps it apart from the target text, the information structure channel of the expressions listed above will come to have 'explanation side text' as its content. The items introduced by these expressions should only be heard by the class and not used in rehearsals of the target texts. Figs. 8.4 and 8.5 on the following page show these different conceptualisations in the case of using a negative comparison to explain a target text. The only difference in conceptualisation is in the information structure of the expression, where the teacher T has <side text coming> and the students have <new information>. The figures thus show the situation of the session I am examining here, where it seems that the upper schema is in place in the teacher's mind. The distinction between side text and target text is hardly clear to most of the students yet, however, so their conceptualisation of the expression is more like fig. 8.5. As we saw in e.g. turn (73–74), Transcript 8.12 on page 318, the students do not always keep target material and accompanying explanations apart: they answer 'not sugary' when the teacher is after the specific term 'without flavour.' When these types of text are mixed, the teacher usually reacts negatively or at least not enthusiastically, and this is what happens in turn (74).

The focus on the text to be learned overrides other concerns about expanding comprehension generally. For instance, while working on tasteless water, the teacher could have brought in a larger scale of 'taste' words: salty, savoury, good, bad, acid, etc. But he sticks to one word, 'sugary', as a basis for comparison.

Again this is partly due to the language problem: the teacher knows better than anyone that his class is not very proficient in French. One of the strategies used by the teachers for achieving some of their learning goals is to not bring in a

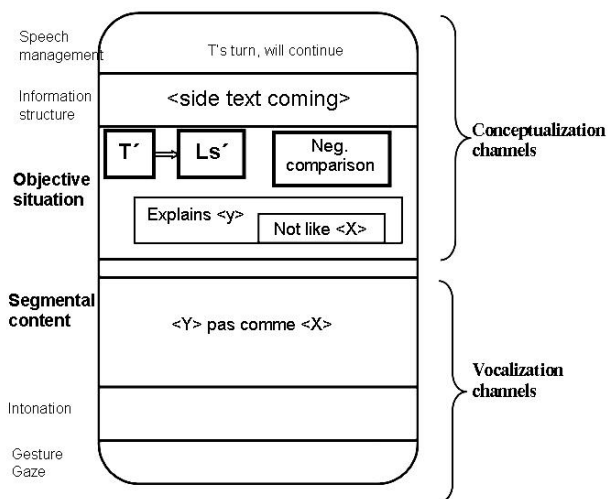


Figure 8.4: The teacher's schema of using a negative comparison to explain target text, already seeing this as sidetext to be kept apart from target text

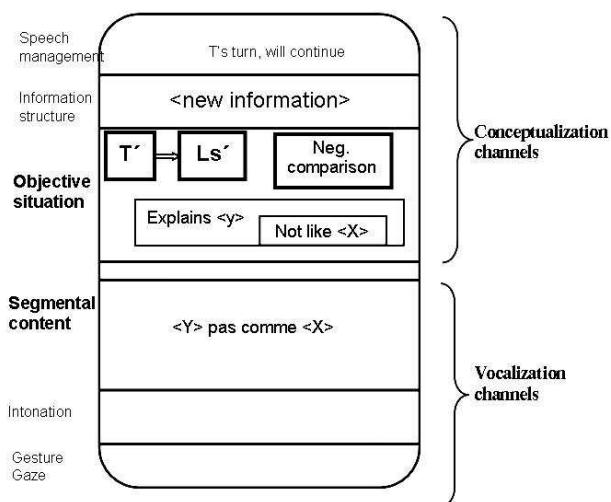


Figure 8.5: The students' schema of using a negative comparison to explain target text, still seeing the explanation as new information to be learned



barrage of new concepts, but simplify and stick to a few things in each lesson. As time goes by, new pieces of learning are added to previously learned items, and knowledge expands—at least that is how it is supposed to work.

The preoccupation with language is visible in another feature of subsection 3: after starting out to ask *l'eau propre est comment?* 'Clean water is how?', most of the questions asked of the students in this part of the session have some form of *on dit c'est comment, on dit comment* 'we say that it is how, we say that how'. The teacher is after the words, the verbal representations, of 'water knowledge'.

### Sectioning markers of lecturing sequences

While the *Bien!* endmarker is a monologic teacher device for wrapping up a sequence of the lesson, another sectioning device exists for what I have labeled *Lecture* sequences in the outline (subsections 3.(d), 4.(c) and 6.). This device is 'dialogic', or rather, it consists of an adjacency pair. The teacher asks at the end of each lecture item *C'est compris, non?* 'It is understood, no?' or *Vous avez compris, non?* 'You have understood, no?' and gets the response *Oui, monsieur*, 'Yes, sir' from the class. This is actually the only possible answer, I have no example in my data on students saying 'No, sir' to these or similar questions.<sup>9</sup>

A weaker form is the common French tag question *n'est-ce pas*, it will sometimes be rejoined by a *Oui, monsieur* from the students (see e.g. turns (63-64)), but not always.

An even weaker form also used in lecturelike sequences is a kind of favorite discourse marker of this particular teacher, the word *Hein?* which occurs 39 times in the session. I have used 'Hm?' as a general translation of this item, but it can have several meanings. In this session it is used as What?=I did not hear you 7 times, as repetition of questions 15 times, and as a 'Did you get it?'-question 17 times.

It is used in the third sense in turn (86) in Transcript 8.14 on the following page below. After each explanatory sentence of the teacher, he puts *hein?* in a way similar to the *C'est compris? –Oui, monsieur* marker used at the end of the turn, but with much less weight. It never elicits a *Oui, monsieur* response from the class, possibly because it so often also functions as a repetition of elicitation questions.

In turns (78-85) the class had been struggling to come up with the expression *inodore*, 'without smell' without success:

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<sup>9</sup>In her study of a SIL-class in Maroua, Moore (2004, 383) had only one instance of a negative answer to a comprehension check question. The anomalous answer made the class laugh and the teacher identified and punished the student who had said 'No.'

**Transcript 8.14** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, outline 3.(c)–(e).**Original:*

- (86) **Teacher:** 08.55.5 On dit que c'est-  
[4.1] c'est in-odore. [0.9] Ça veut  
donc dire que ça ne sent pas, inodore.  
(*Yaya mutters something to boy next  
to him*) [0.9] L'eau- (*writes*) [0.4] in-  
o-dore. L'eau propre est inodore.  
(*finish with dot*) [1.3] Hein? Inodore,  
c'est à dire, ça ne sent pas. [1.5]  
L'eau propre est claire, [0.6] inodore,  
sans saveur, c'est à dir-e que ça n'a  
pas de gout. Hein? Ça ces sont alors  
les qualités d'une eau- propre. [0.2]  
Hein? [0.7] C'est une eau propre.  
Encore appelée eau pooo-[0.3]-table!  
[.] C'est compris, non? [0.3]
- (87) **Students:** 09.32.1 (*low voices*) Oui,  
monsieur [0.3]
- (88) **Teacher:** 09.33.2 Eau potable, ou  
pro- eau propre, c'est la même chose,  
ou l'eau claire. [0.5] Hein? C'est la  
même, chose. C'est compris, non?
- (89) **Students:** 09.41.0 (*louder*) Oui,  
monsieur.
- (90) **Teacher:** 09.42.7 (*very loud voice*)  
Et l'eau propre est comment, alors.  
[1.4] (*normal voice*) L'eau propre est  
comment. – –

*English translation:*

- (86) **Teacher:** 08.55.5 We say that it iiis-  
[4.1] it is in-odorous. [0.9] That  
means then that it does not smell, in-  
odorous. (*Yaya mutters something to  
boy next to him*) [0.9] Water- (*writes*)  
[0.4] in-o-dorous. Clean water is in-  
odorous. (*finish with dot*) [1.3] Hm?  
Inodorous, that is, it does not smell.  
[1.5] Clean water is clear, [0.6] in-  
odorous, without flavour, that means  
that it has not any taste. Hm? That  
is then the qualities of a clean- wa-  
ter. [0.2] Hm? [0.7] It is a clean wa-  
ter. Also called driiin-[0.3]-king wa-  
ter! [.] That's understood, no? [0.3]
- (87) **Students:** 09.32.1 (*low voices*) Yes,  
sir [0.3]
- (88) **Teacher:** 09.33.2 Drinking water, or  
cle- clean water, it's the same thing,  
or clear water. [0.5] Hm ? It is the  
same, thing. That's understood, no?
- (89) **Students:** 09.41.0 (*louder*) Yes, sir.
- (90) **Teacher:** 09.42.7 (*very loud voice*)  
And clean water is how, then. [1.4]  
(*normal voice*) Clean water is how. –  
–

In turn (86) in Transcript 8.14, then, the teacher finally gives in and says the sought-after expression himself, *inodore*, 'inodorous', meaning that something does not smell. The target word *inodore* gets written on the blackboard, sanctioned along with *claire*, *incolore* and *sans saveur* as text that the class should learn. The teacher sums up these qualities, separating each item with a *Hein*. The two most difficult concepts, the nominal expressions *inodore* and *sans saveur*, are explained in terms of a complete French sentence introduced by either *Ça veut donc dire* or *c'est à dire* 'That then means' or 'that is to say'. The teacher finally ties the qualities of odorless and tasteless to the idea of clean water. Then

he introduces another keyword of the lesson, *eau potable*, ‘drinking<sup>10</sup> water’. This little lecture is finished with the pair of *C’est compris, non? – Oui, monsieur*. The identification of clean water with drinking water is repeated in (88), and once more this teacher-given information is rounded off with *C’est compris, non? – Oui, monsieur*.

Looking at the occurrence of *C’est compris, non? – Oui, monsieur* in the larger context of the session, we find that it first ends a subsection of turns about the inodorous quality of clean water, 3.(d), and then ends a short transition sequence pointing out that clean water equals drinking water, 3.(e). The beginning of subsection 4. is again marked also by the teacher using a very loud voice, in turn (90).

In the outline as a whole, the present position of this marker at the end of subsection 3 marks a major transition. The theme changes from clean water in general to drinking water, that is, to water as related to a very basic aspect of daily life. It is at this point that the lesson categorisation as belonging to Practical hygiene could begin to dawn upon the students.<sup>11</sup>

Another lecture sequence with each item rounded off with the same device is found at the end of the main body in the outline. In that position it functions as a more formal summing up of the lesson’s content, before the closure section. In the session we thus have two points where this adjacency pair marks both a closure of a section in the talk and an important turning point in the session. We may therefore conclude that the adjacency pair of *C’est compris, non? – Oui, monsieur* is a schematic speech genre functioning as a formal marker of the lecture genre. It is used for ending sequences where the teacher gives out, instead of eliciting, information to the students. Again it is question of a transition marker as much as an end marker: when the class consents to having understood one point or another, they clear the way for the teacher to go on with the next item. The students will pay a bit more attention since their activity is required, but this will hardly extend backwards to what the teacher has just said.

The most striking characteristic of what I have labelled lectures here, is perhaps the strong tendency for the teachers **not** to lecture in longer stretches. Explanations and minilectures do crop up in between other talk, but questioning is the most commonly used way of presenting material in class. In this way the teachers step away from a common pattern for the expert role as the knowledgeable person who explains things to others. Still they do not relinquish their expert status, as they keep their total powers to evaluate answers given by students. The students are so to speak only ventriloquating the teacher’s chosen

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<sup>10</sup>Or more strictly ‘drinkable’.

<sup>11</sup>In this particular case, though, we find that even the teacher mixes up the subject category at the end of the session, see turn (179).

words and sentences in these interactions.

As for the conceptualisations of the lecture endmarkers, they may again be different for the teacher and for his students. While he seems to use the *vous avez compris, non?* question fairly consistently as a marker of ending a lecturing sequence, the students quite likely are not aware of such a precise usage. To them, it may be just a phrase to which they are required to give a certain response. Again this is likely to change as they continue to interact in class. A schema abstracting the commonalities of many usage events may eventually become entrenched also in the students, but they do not seem to be there as yet. Such a gradual emergence of a linguistic schema is a quite normal process in language learning, but often forgotten by those who already master the schema, as the teacher here.

### **8.2.7 Rehearsing and performing texts: Outline subsection 4**

We have seen that rehearsal and performance of texts are important activities in class, springing from the goal of enabling the students to deliver correct verbal renderings of target material. A successful performance also counts as repetition for the others, and so these two activities often co-occur. Rehearsals of French text are lead by the teacher, but he will often elicit renderings from students in class and use these as a resource. Outside French lessons with their emphasis on rote learning of dialogues, there is somewhat less modeling and imitation in the presentation phase, while rehearsal of the presented material is important in all subjects. The goal is to enable students to promptly perform a formally acceptable rendering of the target text.

In any case texts will be repeated in different ways, by outright rehearsal where the teacher elicits chorus or individual imitation of a model, implicitly by asking the same questions several times, or by using incomplete words and sentences to be filled in by the class. But these techniques are just as often used in presentation efforts as well, as I have demonstrated in the previous subsection. The difference between a presentation phase and a rehearsal/performance phase may thus appear quite fuzzy to the students; they must in any case provide answers to questions in a language which they do not handle very well, just trying to guess what the teacher is after in each case.

In 8.2.5 on page 310 I looked at how texts were elicited in class in a presentational phase of the lesson. In the transcript below, we have reached the rehearsal and performance stage, starting right after the lecturing sequences in Transcript 8.14 on page 324.

**Transcript 8.15** *Practical hygiene, section 4.a., Mipom 23 Feb 2006,**Original:*

- (90) **Teacher:** 09.42.7 (*very loud voice*) Et l'eau propre est comment, alors. [1.4] (*normal voice*) L'eau propre est comment. (*slaps hands together*) Hey! (*several slaps*) L'eau propre est comment. [1.6] Hein? [0.4] Oui. [0.3] C'est qu-, y a des qualités d-d-d-de l'eau propre au tableau déjà, j'ai déjà écrit ça au tableau, non? [0.7] L'eau propre est comment? [2.0] Oui, Iila! [0.3]
- (91) **Iila:** 10.03.1 (*clear voice*) Incolore. [0.4]
- (92) **Teacher:** 10.05.4 Incolore, très bien! [0.2] (*throws a piece of chalk to Iila*) Prends! (*clears throat*) [0.5] Comme les autres ne veulent pas répondre. L'eau propre est comment encore? [1.3] (*louder*) L'eau propre- [0.5] est comment encore.

*English translation:*

- (90) **Teacher:** 09.42.7 (*very loud voice*) And clean water is how, then. [1.4] (*normal voice*) Clean water is how. (*slaps hands together*) Hey! (*several slaps*) Clean water is how. [1.6] Hm? [0.4] Yes. [0.3] It is th-, there are qualities o-o-o-of clean water already on the blackboard, I have already written that on the blackboard, no? [0.7] Clean water is how? [2.0] Yes, Iila! [0.3]
- (91) **Iila:** 10.03.1 (*clear voice*) Un-coloured. [0.4]
- (92) **Teacher:** 10.05.4 Un-coloured, very good! [0.2] (*throws a piece of chalk to Iila*) Catch! (*clears throat*) [0.5] As the others do not want to respond. Clean water is how as well? [1.3] (*louder*) Clean water- [0.5] is how as well.

The transition to a new phase is not very strongly marked: subsection 3. is ended by a lecturing sequence with the end marking adjacency pair *C'est compris, non? –Oui, monsieur*. But as this phrase is not used exclusively to end larger sections of a session, and may crop up to separate smaller lecture pieces as well, it does not by itself project the coming of a new phase. A more telltale sign is the fact that it is used twice in turns (86–89) in a 'summing up' context, a typical feature at the end of sections, but again this is so short and unmarked as to be difficult to catch for the students.

As he goes on in turn (90) above, the teacher does not make a longer pause before he starts on the next phase, though he does mark a change by using a very loud voice. He poses again the question of *comment est l'eau propre* 'how is clean water' several times just like turn (47b) which started the previous subsection presenting the material to be learned. But what is now at stake is not coming up with new items of 'water knowledge', but to reproduce those already presented. The performance phase has begun, and the students need to remember what has been presented already.

To mark this off, the teacher says *Hey!* rather loudly and slaps his hands together to get their full attention. He reminds them that he has even written the qualities of water on the blackboard: at least some of the CP-students can use this to aid their memory.

Another thing which demarcates this section as rehearsal and performance is the rewarding of good performances. Good renderings are often singled out by ordering *Un bravo!* which means that the class will applaud with a special clapping rhythm (*clap, clap, clap-clap-clap, clap*), or by giving the student a gift, as here, and as we saw in 7.2.3 on page 252; see also Moore (2004, 289).

In this case it is Iila who volunteers for submitting an answer and for the third time this session, he comes up with ‘incolore’, this time loud and clear and with the right vowels. He is rewarded with a piece of chalk, something which really has the others pay attention. They throw long glances at Iila and get visibly more anxious to get a turn, half-lifting hands, small-talking and fidgeting. The teacher is well aware of the effect of a well placed gift, as his selfconscious cough and goading remark about the others ‘who don’t want to answer’ shows.

**Transcript 8.16** *Practical hygiene, section 4a. cont., Mipom 23 Feb 2007*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (93) <b>Somebody:</b> 10.13.3 ( <i>in Nizaa, unintelligible</i> )xx xx cúmnì` - lò kwi xx  | (93) <b>Somebody:</b> 10.13.3 ( <i>in Nizaa, unintelligible</i> )xx xx cúmnì` - lò kwi xx  |
| (94) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.15.5 Ibi! [1.6] Oui, Issa!   | (94) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.15.5 Ibi! [1.6] Yes, Issa!   |
| (95) <b>Somebody:</b> 10.18.5 ( <i>very low</i> ) Issa- ( <i>Djeera lifts hand</i> )   | (95) <b>Somebody:</b> 10.18.5 ( <i>very low</i> ) Issa- ( <i>Djeera lifts hand</i> )   |
| (96) <b>Issa:</b> 10.19.0 ( <i>stands up</i> ) L’eau propre est incolore. [0.3]  | (96) <b>Issa:</b> 10.19.0 ( <i>stands up</i> ) Clean water is uncoloured. [0.3]  |
| (97) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.21.1 Oui, incolore, on a déjà dit ça. ( <i>Issa sits down</i> ) L’eau propre est- l’eau propre est comment encore. [0.7] ( <i>to Yacoubou</i> ) Oui! [0.6] | (97) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.21.1 Yes, uncoloured, we’ve already said that. ( <i>Issa sits down</i> ) Clean water is- clean water is how as well. [0.7] ( <i>to Yacoubou</i> ) Yes! [0.6] |
| (98) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 10.27.0 ( <i>almost inaudible</i> ) L’eau propre est- l’eau propre   | (98) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 10.27.0 ( <i>almost inaudible</i> ) Clean water is- clean water  |
| (99) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.28.8 Hein? [0.2] ( <i>Yacoubou lifts hand</i> )  | (99) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.28.8 Hm? [0.2] ( <i>Yacoubou lifts hand</i> )  |
| (100) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 10.29.3 Inc’lore. ( <i>stands up</i> ) [1.3] L’eau propre(*) est incolore. [0.2]  | (100) <b>Yacoubou:</b> 10.29.3 Unc’loured. ( <i>stands up</i> ) [1.3] Crean(*) water is uncoloured. [0.2]  |

*Original:*

(101) **Teacher:** 10.34.1 On a déjà dit ça, dites autres choses. (*Yacoubou sits down*) Y a beaucoup, incolore, c-c-c'est-[0.2] y a d-, l'eau propre est a-, -cor-, est encore comment? [2.3] Quand ça ne sent pas, on dit que c'est comment? [1.5] Oui, Ahmadou!

*English translation:*

(99) **Teacher:** 10.34.1 We've already said that, say other things. (*Yacoubou sits down*) There are many, uncoloured, it- it- it is-[0.2] there ar-, clean water is a-, -wel- is how as well? [2.3] When it does not smell, we say that it is how? [1.5] Yes, Ahmadou!

While the teacher has succeeded in conveying to his class that now is the time to come up with good answers, their eagerness does not produce quite the expected results. Both of the next volunteers only repeat Iila's already given answer, and receive fairly lukewarm acceptance from the teacher. It must be a quite baffling experience for these two to see a classmate be rewarded for producing a correct answer and then obtain nothing themselves when they do the same thing. They even take care to frame their answers as complete sentences, something which Iila did not. But again they have missed a crucial change of speech genre. This is not a common rehearsal session where several renderings of the same item are acceptable, it is already a performance of the target text. Thus a good performance here means to come up with the other items of the text, not only the same item several times. The teacher is slightly frustrated as well; from his point of view the class has had quite a bit of presentation of his chosen qualities, they are written on the blackboard for everybody to see: *propre, claire, incolore, inodore, sans saveur*, 'clean, clear, uncoloured, inodorous, tasteless'. Why do they stick to the one thing that Iila has already said?

The most obvious explanation flows directly from the view of linguistic structures as *usage-based* and emergent, and therefore differentially present in different language users (see 1.1.1 on page 2). While the teacher has his pedagogical phases and the ways of talking for different purposes clear in his mind, his students are still striving to construct meaning out of the concrete speech events taking place in their classroom. They build on locally present context, in this case the fact that Iila was handsomely rewarded for saying a particular thing, and hence try to emulate his example. They disregard for the time being that the teacher has asked *comment encore*, 'yet how', and Yacoubou even barges ahead disregarding that he is saying the same thing as Issa, who did not get a piece of chalk or a big applause. They have not yet pieced together the typical forms of the speech genres using elicitation questions and connected them to different purposes such as presentation, rehearsal and performance of target texts.

The teacher's solution to this impasse is to change his question and give the class a hint: 'When it doesn't smell, we say that it is how?' Ahmadou's

response opens up another rehearsal technique, the speech genres of modeling and imitation.

### 8.2.8 The speech genres of modeling and imitation

As a correct verbal rendering of the subject is so important, modeling and imitation also become important speech genres in class. Again they can be considered as one dialogic genre, rather than two different ones. Modeling of correct French text is done by the teacher. I never heard the class being told to imitate directly the utterance of a student.

Both the teacher and the class need to be aware of the genre characteristics of models and imitations, to be able to single out this material from other talk. Students not familiar with how a model is presented for imitation will fail to produce correct imitations. Teachers mixing up characteristics of modeling with other speech genres will produce ambiguous models, less likely to elicit correct renderings by the class or individual students. As I present examples of this speech genre, I will note markers and separators in modeling and imitations, and look at cases where genres get mixed up.

#### Picking out the target

The following transcript, from section 4.(b) in the lesson outline, shows first how the theme of correct verbal rendering of a concept crops up in the midst of eliciting the qualities of water, in turn (98–99). This leads to a long rehearsal with language modeling of one single item of the target material, and then goes on to model and imitate each item once (125–130).

The problematic word, *inodore* ‘indorous’, was presented in turn (86), as we saw in Transcript 8.14 on page 324, but the class now has difficulties retrieving it. At the teacher’s prompt of ‘When it does not smell, we say that it is how?’, Ahmadou comes up with a mispronounced word at the start of the next transcription excerpt.

**Transcript 8.17** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, from outline 4.(b)i.*

<i>Original:</i>	<i>English translation:</i>
(100) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 10.46.6 ( <i>invisible in back</i> ) Un(*)odeur(*)e	(102) <b>Ahmadou:</b> 10.46.6 ( <i>invisible in back</i> ) Un(*)odeur(*)us
(101) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.48.1 =iinodore, pas un(*)odore, [0.8] inoo- [0.4]	(103) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.48.1 =iinodorou, not un(*)odorous, [0.8] inoo- [0.4]
(102) <b>Students:</b> 10.51.7 ( <i>a few, weakly</i> ) - dore	(104) <b>Students:</b> 10.51.7 ( <i>a few, weakly</i> ) - dorous



## 8.2. SESSION ANALYSIS

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- | <i>Original:</i>  | <i>English translation:</i>   |
|---|---|
| (105) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.52.3 Inodore, repetez! [0.5]                                 | (105) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.52.3 Inodorous, repeat! [0.5]                                  |
| (106) <b>Students:</b> 10.53.9 ( <i>most, stronger</i> ) In-o-dore! [.]               | (106) <b>Students:</b> 10.53.9 ( <i>most, stronger</i> ) In-o-dorous! [.]               |
| (107) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.55.3 Inodore! [0.1]  | (107) <b>Teacher:</b> 10.55.3 Inodorous! [0.1]  |
| (108) <b>Students:</b> 10.56.3 ( <i>everybody, strongly</i> ) (sal-) In-o-dore! [0.1] | (108) <b>Students:</b> 10.56.3 ( <i>everybody, strongly</i> ) (sal-) In-o-dorous! [0.1] |

Ahmadou actually makes two pronunciation mistakes in his rendering of the ‘doesn’t smell’ concept, but the teacher only notices the first, or at least he corrects overtly only the vowel of the first syllable. He models the right form, stressing the problematic syllable, and then he tries to get the class to fill in the rest of the word when he says the first two syllables, turns (103–104). Only a few students respond, and he decides to do a more thorough rehearsal of this comparatively new word, turns (105–106). He announces this by modeling the target word and saying *Repetez!* ‘Repeat!’ thereby entering the model-imitation genre.

The class knows the genre well enough to readily single out the word to be imitated: the next imitation is correctly pronounced and quite strong, and even better in the second try, (though somebody does start to say another word out of sync with the rhythm of imitation).

It is striking how even the youngest students in the SIL are able to carry out the imitation command, as compared to their lack of involvement in answering elicitation questions at other times in this session. When the teacher tells them to repeat something, they are on firm ground, and even stragglers catch up when they do it twice, getting input both from the teacher’s repeated modeling and their classmates’ response. This shows the strength of the community of practice to uphold certain practices. While the SIL children do not engage themselves in answering difficult questions, they have no problems with doing the teacher’s command when it is within their competence. Such imitation activities are part of the zone of legitimate peripheral participation.

### Input and output

The teacher then expands the target by making a complete sentence, but this turns out to be a premature move: the class is not able to repeat this longer item correctly at this point, see Transcript 8.18 on the next page.

**Transcript 8.18** *Practical hygiene Mipom, from outline 4.(b)i., cont. 23 Feb 2006*

*Original:*

- (109) **Teacher:** 10.58.0 L'eau propre est inodore! [0.4]  
 (110) **Students:** 11.00.4 (*everybody*) L'eau propre inodore.  
 (111) **Teacher:** 11.03.2 (*strongly*) Est! [0.1] Est! [0.4]  
 (112) **Students:** 11.04.5 (*a bit scattered*) Est!  
 (113) **Teacher:** 11.05.1 Inodore. [0.3]  
 (114) **Students:** 11.06.43 (*everybody, medium strong*) Inodore.  
 (115) **Teacher:** 11.07.5 L'eau potable est inodore. [0.4]  
 (116) **Students:** 11.10.1 (*everybody, medium strong*) L'eau potable est inodore.

*English translation:*

- (109) **Teacher:** 10.58.0 Clean water is inodorous! [0.4]  
 (110) **Students:** 11.00.4 (*everybody*) Clean water inodorous.  
 (111) **Teacher:** 11.03.2 (*strongly*) Is! [0.1] Is! [0.4]  
 (112) **Students:** 11.04.5 (*a bit scattered*) Is!  
 (113) **Teacher:** 11.05.1 Inodorous [0.3]  
 (114) **Students:** 11.06.43 (*everybody, medium strong*) Inodorous.  
 (115) **Teacher:** 11.07.5 Drinking water is inodorous. [0.4]  
 (116) **Students:** 11.10.1 (*everybody, medium strong*) Drinking water is inodorous.

In turn (110), the class skips the word *est* 'is', and the teacher immediately corrects this by modeling this single item twice. But this seems to come a bit abruptly on the class; not everybody is able to repeat this word and of course it does not work to enter the word into its correct slot and repeat the complete sentence.

This little incident shows the characteristic dependency on the model input which comes with this kind of rehearsal: the repeating group will usually exactly copy the model, down to details of rhythm and prosody. Problems arise when the item to repeat is too long or partly unknown, then the repetition falls apart. It is impossible to backtrack and put a single word into its place in the middle of the sentence, that possibility is completely overridden by the flow of the repetition exercise. A correct rendering of the whole sentence requires a renewed modeling of it. The teacher chooses instead to repeat the target word of *inodore*, and the class gets back on track. When he repeats the previous sentence with one word changed, from *propre* to *potable*, the class follows this change well enough.

### Using *Hein*?

In the next turns, the teacher goes for a rehearsal of the connection of clean water to drinking water, with a little explanation first in turn (117), see Transcript 8.19 on the facing page. After this, the teacher goes on to remodel the sentence and

launching the class into rehearsal by saying *allez-y* ‘go ahead’, an equally well-known marker of the rehearsal genre. The order to repeat comes after the model, so that the class must backtrack a bit to repeat it correctly, but the class is used to this and the timespan between model and order is so short as not to be a problem.

**Transcript 8.19** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, from outline 4.(b)i, cont.*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (117) <b>Teacher:</b> 11.13.5 Quand on parle de l’eau propre, c’est l’eau poo-tabl-e. [0.4] Hein? L’eau potaable est inooo-dore, [0.2] allez-y. [0.5] | (117) <b>Teacher:</b> 11.13.5 When we speak of clean water, it is drink-ing waa-ter.[0.4]Hm? Drink-ing wa-ter is inooo-dorous, [0.2]go ahead.[0.5] |
| (118) <b>Students:</b> 11.20.7 ( <i>most, some disturbance in SIL 2nd row</i> ) L’eau pot-ab-le est in-odore.   | (118) <b>Students:</b> 11.20.7 ( <i>most, some disturbance in SIL 2nd row</i> ) Drink-ing water is in-odorous.                                     |

In his explanation the teacher marks the latest target word by saying it slowly and breaking it into syllables, *poo-tabl-e*. He lengthens the first vowel and includes the mute -e at the end. There is a subtle difference in rhythm and pacing, difficult to render in transcription format, of the first sentence of the turn, meant to explain, and the second sentence, meant as a repetition model. But between the two sentences belonging each to a different speech genre, there also intervenes the favorite discourse marker of this particular teacher, the word *Hein?* Here it is used as a ‘Did you get it’ -question, and serves to separate the piece of information from the model phrase for rehearsal, in a way similar to the *C’est compris?* –*Oui, monsieur* marker, but with much less weight. Again the class has no problem to select the proper part of the teacher’s turn and follow the repeat instruction.

### Disturbing episode

Simultaneously the teacher spots a girl who is not paying attention as the rehearsal continues, on the second row in the SIL class.

The incident should remind us of the findings of the HOME surveys (Bradley & Corwyn 2005). In these extensive surveys made by one-hour visits to homes where at least one parent and the target child should be present, several aspects of family environment were measured, such as Warmth/Responsiveness to child, Harshness/Discipline and Stimulation/Teaching. The HOME Inventory was adapted to cultural differences. A consistent find in Africa was a higher rate of spanking or slapping of children, but not necessarily correlated with lower scores of Warmth/Responsiveness, indifference to children’s needs or disrespect for children per se (Bradley & Corwyn 2005, 471). This parenting strategy goes with the idea that children should always be deferent to elders.

**Transcript 8.20** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, from outline 4.(b)i, cont.*

*Original:*

- (119) **Teacher:** 11.24.5 (*goes down aisle*)  
L'eau potable est inodore. (*puts  
hand on head of SIL girl closest to  
aisle, she lifts her arms protectively*)  
[0.4]
- (120) **Students:** 11.26.6 (*most repeat, but  
all heads are turned to watch SIL  
girl*) L'eau (*teacher removes SIL  
girl's left hand and slaps her ear*)  
potable (*teacher speaks sharply to  
her, unintelligible*) est ino-dore.
- (121) **Teacher:** 11.29.8 (*girl covers  
face with her arm, teacher moves  
away, the others are looking at  
the teacher again*) L'eau potable  
est inodore=Tais-toi, (*in Fulfulde*)  
ma66u! [0.8]
- (122) **Students:** 11.32.8 (*with teacher, a  
few only*) L'eau- (*stop speaking*)
- (123) **Teacher:** 11.32.8 (*starting with the  
students*) L'eau- 11.33.3 (*continues  
alone*) potable est inodore! [0.1]
- (124) **Students:** 11.34.8 (*most*) L'eau- po-  
tab-le est in-o-dore.
- (125) **Teacher:** 11.38.6 Iin-o-dore. [0.2]
- (126) **Students:** 11.40.01 (*most, louder*)  
Iin-o-dore!

*English translation:*

- (119) **Teacher:** 11.24.5 (*goes down aisle*)  
Drinking water is inodorous. (*puts  
hand on head of SIL girl closest to  
aisle, she lifts her arms protectively*)  
[0.4]
- (120) **Students:** 11.26.6 (*most repeat, but  
all heads are turned to watch SIL  
girl*) Drinking (*teacher removes SIL  
girl's left hand and slaps her ear*)  
water (*teacher speaks sharply to her,  
unintelligible*) is in-odorous.
- (121) **Teacher:** 11.29.8 (*girl covers face  
with her arm, teacher moves away,  
the others are looking at the teacher  
again*) Drinking water is inodor-  
ous=be quiet, (*in Fulfulde*) shut up!  
[0.8]
- (122) **Students:** 11.32.8 (*with teacher, a  
few only*) Drinking- (*stop speaking*)
- (123) **Teacher:** 11.32.8 (*starting with  
the students*) Drinking- (*continues  
alone*) water is inodorous! [0.1]
- (124) **Students:** 11.34.8 (*most*) Drink-ing  
wa-ter is in-o-dorous.
- (125) **Teacher:** 11.38.6 Iin-o-dorous.  
[0.2]
- (126) **Students:** 11.40.01 (*most, louder*)  
Iin-o-dorous!

The girl on the second row seems to have been fiddling with something without paying full attention to the joint activity of rehearsing. After being slapped, she starts crying and the teacher sharply tells her to be quiet, making the rest of the class stumble in their repetition of the model. He has been anticipating this, though, because he starts together with them on their turn, and completes it when they fade out, making a new model instance for them instead, turns (118–119). Then he goes back to do two more rehearsals of the target word *inodore*, with good results.

The correction of the inattentive student has been done with a minimum of disturbance of the joint activity of rehearsal, they have hardly missed a beat. The other students have watched the punishment without making any comments or other reactions, they have no possibility of raising their voice against harsh treatment, though physical punishment is in fact forbidden by law in Cameroonian schools.

### Rehearsing the list

From this point the teacher goes from the now familiar sentence frame with *inodore* to other target words, and the class does one repetition of each quality of drinking water in a complete sentence. These sentences form the core content of the material to be learned in this lesson of Practical hygiene.

**Transcript 8.21** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, from outline 4.(b)ii., cont.*

*Original:*

*English translation:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (127) <b>Teacher:</b> 11.41.4 L'eau potable est claire. [0.4]                     | (124) <b>Teacher:</b> 11.41.4 Drinking water is clear. [0.4]                          |
| (128) <b>Students:</b> 11.43.7 ( <i>most</i> ) L'eau potable est claire.          | (125) <b>Students:</b> 11.43.7 ( <i>most</i> ) Drinking water is clear.               |
| (129) <b>Teacher:</b> 11.46.4 =L'eau potable est incolore. [0.2]                  | (126) <b>Teacher:</b> 11.46.4 =Drinking water is uncoloured. [0.2]                    |
| (130) <b>Students:</b> 11.48.7 ( <i>most</i> ) L'eau potable est incolore.        | (127) <b>Students:</b> 11.48.7 ( <i>most</i> ) Drinking water is uncoloured.          |
| (131) <b>Teacher:</b> 11.52.0 =L'eau potable est sans saveur. [0.3]               | (128) <b>Teacher:</b> 11.52.0 =Drinking water is without flavour. [0.3]               |
| (132) <b>Students:</b> 11.54.7 ( <i>most</i> ) L'eau potable est sans saveur. [.] | (129) <b>Students:</b> 11.54.7 ( <i>most</i> ) Drinking water is without flavour. [.] |

While the class in Transcript 8.21 neatly lists the important points of the lesson, the emphasis is still on the correct French pronunciation and rote learning of these sentences, as shown by the choice of the model-imitation genre. I shall look at the continuation of the present interaction in Section 8.2.9 below.

### 8.2.9 Lists and texts to learn

As I have shown in the outline, several of the sections in the session bring in some material which at or towards the end of the section is summed up in a listlike text, see turns (17–19a, 86, 135 and 159-163). The lists are parts of the text that

the class is supposed to learn in the lesson, and as such important points in the sessions.

As instantiations of a speech genre they have certain typical features marking them as target texts. This is of course first and foremost the itemized structure, portioning the target material into appropriate chunks, usually in the complete sentence format. Lists often also have framing sentences before or after the list itself, and they are typically placed at the end of sections, something which makes them function as sectioning devices in the larger picture of the interaction event. I shall briefly comment each of the lists in the present session, some of which have occurred in transcription earlier in this chapter.

**Turn (17-19a):** We briefly considered the transition from outline section 1. to outline section 2. in 8.2.3 on page 302, but turns (17-19a) also contain a listing of target material: the locations where to find water. I analysed some of the elicitation process in Transcript 8.1 on page 292. When the information had been given by different students in the class, the teacher changed the points to an acceptable linguistic form: he corrected *dans les puits*, ‘in the wells’ to *au puits*, ‘at wells’, and *pompi* ‘pump’ to *au forage*, ‘at the drill hole’. The teacher wrote this on the blackboard. After a word training session, the teacher then listed up the places in (17) to (19a), this time putting them inside a frame as a more formal summing up. It starts with ‘Thus, there are places where one may find water,’ then lists these places in complete sentences, two items with a rising ‘more to come’ prosody and one item with a ‘last on the list’ prosody. Then he adds the ocean and rivers, starting this with a prosody which marks it as special—this is not something he requires the class to learn, he only mentions it, a side text as it were. Then the frame comes back, ‘There are many places for finding water.’ This, then, is the text to be learned for this part of the lesson, nicely rounded off. After a medium pause the first part of the session is ended with an emphatic *Bien!*, ‘Well!’ and a fairly long pause (2–3 seconds).

**Turn (86):** The list in turn (86) is included in Transcript 8.14 on page 324, as the turn also contains a minilesson ended by the adjacency pair of *C’est compris, non? –Oui, monsieur*. But before this point, the teacher quickly lists up the qualities of water that he has elicited so far and says *Ça, ces sont alors les qualités d’une eau propre*, ‘This, then, are the qualities of a clean water,’ framing the preceding sentences as a list of the target material. The ‘minilectures’ set off with *C’est compris, non? –Oui, monsieur*, together with the listing text, pick out this place as a major transition point in the session, getting ready for the ensuing performance phase.

**Turn (135):** The list here is somewhat short and has no frames, the turn also containing lecturing and class management. Just before this turn the teacher again makes a little explanation lecture in turn (133), expanding on the target word which had been difficult besides *inodore*, *sans saveur* ‘without flavour’. He compares drinking water first to *gaari* ‘mush’ and then to *shai* ‘tea’, both of which it is unlike. He ends with a *C’est compris, non? –Oui, monsieur*. Then he expands a bit more on *shai*, explaining that *shai* is what they call coffee.<sup>12</sup> He lectures a bit more, tells off a group of SIL girls moving about too much, makes a pause and then lists up the same four sentences ending the model-imitation sequence above.

Nobody takes this to be a new instance of modeling, however. Of course, there is no ‘repeat!’ order present, but the vocal form itself of these sentences makes them unlikely models. Modeling typically employs a continuous, ‘natural’ intonation contour for sentences, seeking to entrench a correct intonation with the students, though it often gets too clearly scanned into a certain rhythm to really be natural. This style is not present here, however, as the pauses between each item are way too short and the teacher draws out some syllables and makes pauses inside words and phrases as well. The purpose is rather to impress each of the items on the class by underlining certain words. A further effect is to train for cut-off points in these words and sentences, preparing for future use of unfinished ‘hanging’ sentences.

**Transcript 8.22** *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, from outline 4.(d), cont.*

*Original:*

- (133) **Teacher:** 11.58.1 Sans saveur, ça veut donc dire [0.1] pas de gout! [0.4] Hein? [0.1] On ne sent pas le gout, [0.2] hein? [1.9] L’eau- [0.5] quand vous buvez le, la-la-la bouillie, [0.2] c’est sucrée, [0.2] mais l’eau potable n’a pas- [0.6] ce n’est pas sucrée comme- (*slapped girl finally takes arm off face, looks sad*) [0.6] la bouillie, [0.4] hein? [0.2] C’est n’est pas comme le shai. [1.4] C’est compris, non? [0.1]

*English translation:*

- (133) **Teacher:** 11.58.1 Without flavour, that means then [0.1] no taste! [0.4] Hm? [0.1] One does not feel the taste, [0.2] hm? [1.9] Water- [0.5] when you drink the, tha-tha-that mush, [0.2] it is sweet, [0.2] but drinking water does not have- [0.6] it is not sweet like- (*slapped girl finally takes arm off face, looks sad*) [0.6] the mush, [0.4] hm? [0.2] It is not like the shai. [1.4] That’s understood, no? [0.1]

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<sup>12</sup>It is common to use *café* ‘coffee’ for any hot drink involving something making it black and bought at a store, be it tea, coffee or chikory root.

*Original:*

- (134) **Students:** 12.18.6 (*a few, not very loud*) Oui, monsieur.
- (135) **Teacher:** 12.19.4 =Le shaï, c'est le café que vous d-d-dites-là . [0.8] L'eau- [0.3] est [0.4] claire. [0.5] Ça n'a pas de gout. Quand ça n'a pas de gout, on dit sans saa- [0.4] -veur! (*a girl 2nd row stands up and sit down again, looks outside*) [0.8] Quand ça ne sent pas- [0.4] (*harshly, to 2nd row SIL, innermost girls*) Hey! [2.0] (*smacks lips*) [0.2] Assois-toi comme ça! (*girls comply*) [2.4] L'eau potable eest-[0.3] in-co-[0.2]-lore! (*he starts strolling down the aisle*) L'eau potable est inoo-[0.3]-dore! L'eau potable eest-[0.4] claire![0.1] L'eau potable est sans saaa-[0.4]-veur! (*teacher turns*) [0.5] Hein? (*starts forward*) [0.4] L'eau potable, c'eest [0.1], l'eau comment, l'eau sale? [1.0] Hein? [0.1]

*English translation:*

- (134) **Students:** 12.18.6 (*a few, not very loud*) Yes, sir.
- (135) **Teacher:** 12.19.4 =The shaï, that is the coffee that you t-t-talk about there. [0.8] Waater- [0.3] is [0.4] clear. [0.5] It does not have any taste. When it does not have a taste, we say without flaa- [0.4] -vour! (*a girl 2nd row stands up and sit down again, looks outside*) [0.8] When it does not smell- [0.4] (*harshly, to 2nd row SIL, innermost girls*) Hey! [2.0] (*smacks lips*) [0.2] Sit down like that! (*girls comply*) [2.4] Drinking water iiis- [0.3] un-co-[0.2]-loured! (*he starts strolling down the aisle*) Drinking water is inoo-[0.3]-dorous! Drinking water iiis-[0.4] clear! [0.1] Drinking water is without flaaa-[0.4]-vour! (*teacher turns*) [0.5] Hm? (*starts forward*) [0.4] Drinking water, it iis [0.1], what water, dirty water? [1.0] Hm? [0.1]

It is only after clearing away the necessary explanations and the class management sequence in turn (135) that the teacher gets ahead with his list. We may notice how abruptly the teacher again shifts from a lecturing mode to asking questions at the end of the turn. He finishes his four sentences as he strolls down the aisle, turns around and says *hein?* and then goes straight ahead with a new round of performance checks.<sup>13</sup>

**Turns (159-163)** This is the last list of the session and it is a curiously jumbled sequence. It grows out of the last round of performance elicitation, where the teacher selects students for speaking, instead of allocating turns to volunteers. In the process he simplifies the questions, using polarity questions rather than wh-word questions. He finishes by asking if drinking water smells, and gives away half the word in a completion-question. Ibi answers that with a mispronounced

<sup>13</sup>Some goings-on on the first row of SIL have been erased in turn (135), as they did not have any impact on the teacher-students interaction, see Appendix for complete transcription.



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word, *inodeure*(\*), turn (156), it should be *inodore*. The best translation of this word in English is ‘odourless’, I have, however, used ‘inodorous’ to keep it closer to the teacher’s words as he grapples with the mispronunciation.

### Transcript 8.23 *Practical hygiene, Mipom 23 Feb 2006, from outline 6.(d).*

#### *Original:*

- (156) **Ibi:** 14.09.6 (*stands up*) C’est in-odeur(\*) [0.4]
- (157) **Teacher:** 14.11.5 Inoo- [0.5] -dore! Inodeur, oui, inodeur, oui, c’est, c’est- (*Ibi sits down*) on dit inodore, c’est compris, non? [0.3]
- (158) **Students:** 14.18.4 (*most of class*) Oui, monsieur.
- (159) **Teacher:** 14.19.3 =Oui. [0.9] Bon. [0.6] Boon. [0.3] Inco- [1.3] incoo- [0.1] (*Siroma 1st row suddenly brings his bag closer, looks defiantly at the rest of row*) -lore, oui, [0.2] (*teacher strolls down*) inodeur, c’est la même chose, mais on dit inodore, c’est compris, non? (*turns*)
- (160) **Students:** 14.31.4 (*not very loud*) Oui, monsieur.
- (161) **Teacher:** 14.32.8 Bien! (*starts forward*) [0.7] Bon, [0.1] incolore, ça n’a pas deee- (*turns to class*) [1.1] couleur, c’est compris? [0.4]
- (162) **Students:** 14.38.7 (*not very loud*) Oui, monsieur. (*Siroma starts fumbling with smth in his bag*)

#### *English translation:*

- (156) **Ibi:** 14.09.6 (*stands up*) It is inodeurus(\*) [0.4]
- (157) **Teacher:** 14.11.5 Inoo- [0.5] -dorous! Inodeurus, yes, inodeurus, yes, It is, it i- (*Ibi sits down*) we say inodorous, that’s understood, no? [0.3]
- (158) **Students:** 14.18.4 (*most of class*) Yes, sir.
- (159) **Teacher:** 14.19.3 =Yes. [0.9] Well. [0.6] Weell. [0.3] Unco- [1.3] Uncoo- [0.1] (*Siroma 1st row suddenly brings his bag closer, looks defiantly at the rest of row*) -loured, yes, [0.2] (*teacher strolls down*) inodeurus, it is the same thing, but we say inodorous, that’s understood, no? (*turns*)
- (160) **Students:** 14.31.4 (*not very loud*) Yes, sir.
- (161) **Teacher:** 14.32.8 Well! (*starts forward*) [0.7] Well, [0.1] uncoloured, it hasn’t anyyy- (*turns to class*) [1.1] colour, that’s understood? [0.4]
- (162) **Students:** 14.38.7 (*not very loud*) Yes, sir. (*Siroma starts fumbling with something in his bag*)

*Original:*

(163) **Teacher:** 14.39.6 =Boon! [5.3] Bien!  
 (strolls down) [0.6] Eet sans saa- [0.2]  
 -veur! Ça n'a pas de- (other boy 1st  
 row, rises and takes smth from the  
 sack) [0.4] gout! [0.3] Bien! [0.9]  
 Vous avez compris, non? [0.2]

(164) **Students:** 14.52.6 (not very loud)  
 Oui, monsieur. [0.1] (teacher turns)

*English translation:*

(163) **Teacher:** 14.39.6 =Weell! [5.3] Well!  
 (strolls down) [0.6] Aand without fla-  
 [0.2] -vour! It hasn't anyyy- (other  
 boy 1st row, rises and takes smth from  
 the sack) [0.4] taste! [0.3] Well! [0.9]  
 You have understood, no? [0.2]

(164) **Students:** 14.52.6 (not very loud)  
 Yes, sir. [0.1] (teacher turns)

In turn (157–159) the teacher both corrects Ibi's anomalous *inodeure* form and then takes it up for some consideration: his fault is after all based on the word for 'smell', *odeur*. But the right form is *inodore*, that is what one says, even if it is the same thing, and built on a similar pattern to *color*, *incolore*. These considerations are rounded off with *C'est compris?* –*Oui, monsieur.* –*Bien!* The teacher then continues to cite the remaining qualities of water, together with an explicative sentence and a *C'est compris?* –*Oui, monsieur.* for each. The whole sequence is a sort of summing up of the text to be learned, couched more or less in a lecturing form. In the following turn (165), the teacher shifts to a Stand-up – sit-down sequence, preparing to finish the session.

### Coming to terms with Practical hygiene

The last bit of the session on drinking water has the common ending sequence of eliciting the subject of the lesson from the class. In this case also the teacher fails to elicit the right answer from the class—they do not seem to have a clue of what they have been doing for the last 16 minutes. Using a common teacher strategy of derouting the students by 'unleading questions', the teacher asks if the title of the lesson is *la Morale* 'Moral education'. This only leads to Iila's proposal of a definition of 'moral', turn (173) "*Que c'est beau - mauvais.*" 'That it is bad-good.' Finally the teacher has to provide the title himself in turn (177). Funnily, he himself first labels the session wrongly, saying that it has been a session of Science and Environmental education. Then he thinks better of it and comes up with the subject of Practical hygiene.

We shall leave the class in Mipom at this point as well and go on to other matters. However, first a few words need to be said about a more total understanding of the lesson of clean water.

Knowing the importance of clean drinking water as a health issue, one may be surprised at the purely verbal character of lesson content in the session analysed here. In this very village, the main water source was a stream, though some families also had wells. This particular stream was somewhat large and had water

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which seemed clear at least to the eye, but the place closest to the village where most people fetched their drinking water was also where they went to do their washing up, clothes washing, where the children went swimming, where cattle, donkeys and people waded over the stream—hardly a very clean water. The teacher himself preferred to bring his drinking water from the drill hole well in Galim, often biking the 33 km back and forth each weekend with big plastic cans strapped on to his bike. He never said that it was because the river water he could get in Mipom was too dirty, but that it was ‘too cold’, something which did not agree with his stomach.

But before judging our teacher in Mipom too severely, there are some other features of the situation to consider. If he really felt that the children and everybody else in Mipom (at least 200 persons) should not drink riverwater anymore, what should they then drink? Obviously one can boil the riverwater and even put it through a filter, and it would be quite safe to drink. But that would mean a major increase in wood consumption, as this was the only available source of energy for boiling water. All the bigger children and most of the women would get an increased workload, as it was one of their tasks to bring home wood from the bush around. For this really to work, one would also need to use clean, boiled, water to wash the dishes in, to keep the hens away from buckets and basins filled with water in the yard, and to put everybody on a cure for worms. In other words, a complete sanitation of the drinking water is not a very easy project, and hardly something a single school teacher could hope to pull through.

There is no question that the water in this village was not of a good standard, and especially smaller children would often fall ill from parasites or diarrhea. Unschooled people, that is the majority of the villagers, do not have very definite ideas about water sanitation, while those who had done some years at least of school at least were aware of the problem.

The story of the lesson of Practical Hygiene in Mipom is in many ways a rather graphic illustration of the notion of the importance of a community which can provide interpretive support as an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge, as noted by Lave & Wenger (1991, 97), cited in Chapter 5 on page 139. The village community does not have the cultural heritage necessary for making sense of the school’s knowledge of sanitation and water. The school community of practice in Mipom have just one member who have participated in communities with access to a culture which explicates qualities of water in other ways. In that community notions of water-borne diseases, malaria control through water-sanitation and a range of other health issues pertaining to water have meaning. In the village they have not. Our lesson about the qualities of drinking water is for most of these children a first meeting with that whole body of practical hygiene knowledge which we so easily take for granted. Maybe we should not expect more from the teacher.

### Improving teaching

Another issue here is the pedagogical outlook of teachers. Most of the teachers I met in the Galim area were formally trained in a teachers college during the last 10 years, and had been taught to use the so-called ‘New pedagogical approach’. But this approach is steadily developed, and a new idea now being introduced in teacher training is the importance of concretisation. The use of concrete objects in explaining more abstract ideas is thus becoming a more common feature of teaching with recently trained teachers. Earlier such object-centered teaching was also often thought to mean only the use of especially adapted and expensive teaching materials, such as laboratory equipment. Now there is a better understanding of the usefulness of nearly any kind of object for concretising target material, because something which can be observed and handled by students will be more thoroughly grasped than just a verbal lecture on the theme, even using elicitation questions. As an example, I can mention the teacher student’s research *mémoire* that I collected at the teacher’s college in Tignère. The thesis describes a succesful experiment of using an oil lamp to explicate fuel consumption and combustion in a class, as compared to mere verbal explication (Hayatou 2007).

In the present case it would have been possible to bring a dirty and a clean water sample to class to illustrate the qualities of clean water as compared to dirty, odorous and miscolored water, also from the point of view of learning French vocabulary. But this teaching method has not been commonly promoted in teaching education in the past, and our Mipom school teacher may not have been aware of the possibility.

## 8.3 School and village together

In this and the preceding chapters, I have kept village life and school contexts apart as I have identified speech genres of teaching and learning. It is nonetheless important to realise that the schools are part of their villages, and that the students are the children of the village as well. As noted in chapter 7, the two communities of village and school come together in the celebration of national festival days that function as boundary meetings (Wenger 1998). These ceremonies have their set rules of how to proceed on public occasions, and engender quite specific ways of using language, such as the reading of the programme and an official speech in French.

More important for the children, however, are the meetings between school and village context that take place every day, in the children’s constant brokering of the different demands and resources of these two ways of being. I will present two such meetings in an effort to measure the gap that the children of Galim,

Mipom and other villages continuously must cope with.

#### 8.3.1 Bringing a school practice home

How school practices can enter village life is an interesting question, and so is the question of whether this will be a positive or negative force in village life. The knowledge dispensed in school can certainly have very important impacts on people's life, as the session of Practical hygiene shows. But what of the ways of being also learnt at school, the practices of 'doing school', are they unequivocally beneficial?

During our stay in Mipom, my research assistant Patouma started a literacy class with the mother of my host family and her closest neighbour. The two women, both completely illiterate, struggled to apprehend the letters and the very idea of reading, not to mention the problem of writing legible letters. Maayi's son Manga would follow as well, as he wanted to be able to read his recently acquired book of Nizaa proverbs. He was eleven years old and already a schoolboy in CP. He had of course a huge advantage over the two women, as he was already used to handling letters and words in both reading and writing. But Patouma was not satisfied with his strategy of reading. Instead of going step by step and actually learn all the letters of the Nizaa alphabet, he tried to learn the proverbs of his booklet by heart, using both his knowledge of the French alphabet and what he picked up about the tones and the pronunciation of the Nizaa alphabet in the literacy sessions with his mother. This incomplete knowledge he used only as aides for his memory, as he "read" the proverbes. As he knew some of them in a slightly different oral form, he would often "misread" his little booklet. The idea that the sentences should not only be correctly memorised, but actually read at each occasion, was clearly not quite obvious to him. It is how children cope with reading at school, though, especially in the lower grades. Those who continue seem to get the hang of it at some point, however.

One evening Patouma set them a dictation. Maayi's competence was thoroughly stretched to do it, though the dictation was quite short. Manga finished well before her, and immediately turned over his notebook. Maayi noticed and asked why? He only smiled and would not say anything about it. Patouma explained that it was a school way of doing it: as soon as a dictation was finished, or a math problem solved, the teacher would shout for the students to *Cachez vos ardoises!* 'Hide your slates!'

The idea is to block the students from cheating. The teachers know quite well the general tendency to imitate friends, and see it only as a bad habit of getting the right answer without thinking for themselves, occasionally getting wrong answers for the same reason (see 5.4.3). Unfortunately this practice also functions as a constant and relentless training in keeping knowledge to oneself and to never

cooperate about finding the right answer. There was literally no cooperation in any of the classes I observed; any attempt by students to discuss a problem between them was immediately stopped and denigrated as cheating, moreover it was lack of attention to the only lawful source of knowledge, the teacher. All student activity was in this way also forced into a competitive pattern, where your chance to getting a piece of chalk from the teacher also depended on the others not knowing what you knew.

Patouma, to be sure, did not explain this to Maayí in all its grisly detail, but she explained the essential idea of stopping cheaters. Maayí had a good laugh at this thought and the matter stopped there, though I did not see Maayí start to turn over her notebook when finishing a task.

To my mind, however, the idea of outlawing cooperation, exemplified by Maja's act here, is a practice going against the very grain of the village setting. At home the children readily cooperate with each other to accomplish tasks. They negotiate how to play their games, and they quarrel quite a bit trying out each other's strengths and weaknesses. The adults and older children will monitor younger children as they carry out tasks, and step in with helpful advice when necessary. Of course, this would more often than not take the form of scolding: Nizaa parents and older siblings are not ever-patient angels. Still the basic idea of a common responsibility and the possibility of another pitching in to help you out would be there. The school practices of never working together and to see this as only negative can clearly become a quite disruptive force in village life. Maja did not bring in the practice of hiding his work in just any village context, however, but in the specific and quite new context of the literacy class, which both resembles and is different from the public school.

### **8.3.2 When Uncle Hare visited school**

As noted in Chapter 3, some of my data are hybrid material containing aspects of both the main settings of this study. This is especially true of the storytelling sessions of Patouma at the Group 2 school in Galim. Going back to the story of Uncle Hare and his friend the Cock (see 5.4.3 on page 207), I shall take a closer look at the exchange between Patouma and the class after the telling of the tale itself. As noted in 5.4.3, Patouma at this occasion tried to elicit the deeper meaning of the tale from the class, even though this is not a customary way to proceed when telling tales. She herself connected this to the school context, where elicitation questions are by far the most common form of interaction in class.

#### Eliciting the meaning

Patouma started the telling of her tale by warning the students that she would ask them to tell it back to her afterwards. Then she told the tale in a fairly straightforward manner, ending with the usual tale formula of ‘The tale is finished, the tale has diminished, I have grown.’ After this she homed in on her target of clarifying the deeper meaning by asking several questions about the characters of the tale and what they did, in effect telling the story once more. She finished this by pointing out the very visible difference between the Hare and the Cock at the end of the story.

- (115) **Sìjw ɲgòò à ɲí kárá, á tóóɲwá, á ɲí ɲwɛɛɲ kɛ̀ɛ̀wà, wú ɲí waa á gwéè ‘wa’, ðùù waa saakíí ɲíró mum, ðùù kúkírá.**

“The Cock is in his compound, he crows, he produces children, he lives with his wife; the wife of the Hare is left all alone, the Hare is dead.”

She goes on to ask what the Hare had done, and as she gets no answer to that, rephrases to ask if the Hare is a smart fellow, **ɲì géɲgààɲ**, or a loony, **ɲì ðím**. The word **ɲì géɲgààɲ** is related to the word **géɲkírá** ‘awakened, smart’ used of children, especially of babies starting to interact and explore the world around them. Her question brings forward the opinion that the Hare is a loony. She asks back, Why is he a loony? and somebody comes up with the fact that he cuts off his own neck. Yes, says Patouma, and continues:

- (123) **Èèɲ hééɲ, á nɛ̀ɛ̀ɲ géɲ ndóɲwú kù ñuro ááára dágɲá? Sìjw ɲgòò wú ðùù dágwná, nɛ̀ɛ̀ɲ géɲ ndóɲwú kwí?**

“Exactly; between the two of them, who is the smarter? Between the Cock and the Hare, who is the smarter?”

Nobody answers, and she has to state herself that the Cock is the smarter between the two of them, even if people normally say that Hare is the smartest. Today the Cock has killed Uncle Hare. Then she asks if the students are smart or not. Some answer yes, others no. Patouma points out that the Hare was not smart, and as for them, would they rather be like the Cock or the Hare? The answer is ‘like the Cock.’ Patouma then responds:

- (129) **Ùhúm, ðùù mwaɲw tow-wuré.**

“Exactly! The Hare imitated.”

The first verb **mwaɲw** means to ‘tell’ (French *raconter*), the second verb **tow** means to ‘follow’. The two together, ‘tell-follow’ is commonly used of telling a tale (Patouma did so herself in the beginning of the session when she announced

that she was going to tell a tale). The idea is that the teller follows an existing text. Here then it means imitate, by virtue of the Hare's following the 'story' of the Cock's wife and rushing off to do the same thing.

She elaborates the notion of imitation by explaining that the Hare as he had failed to see the neck of his friend, had said to himself that he would cut off his neck, he had imitated. He simply failed to do a very important thing:

(130)

- b. **Méé naŋw-wú-ŋwa, mééwú-ŋwa' à yéŋw lánw' yí pín ní lèè ghèè, yí dááŋci làà ? Á nù díim we.**

"He didn't think further, he didn't think that if I do this thing I will stop how? He was like a loony."

- (131) **Mwaŋw tow-wu ló' kúú kínij dad, dad, dad; díwu a' nù yéŋw mwáŋw tow pe. Díwu géŋné', díwu wáára kó?**

"When he imitated so, he died from it, dat, dat, dat; you-pl should not imitate somebody's thing. Be smart, do you understand?"

- (132) **Díwu géŋné', díwu yír' nzáj né', wáána ra?**

"You be smart, you keep your eyes clear, you understand?"

The students answer that yes, they understand, and Patouma leaves it at that, going on to her translation in French of the tale for the teacher and those students who did not speak Nizaa.

Looking on the exchanges cited above, we see that as Patouma goes about talking about the meaning of the tale, she still tries to get the students to think for themselves, by using comparisons of the Cock and the Hare's final situations, by making the students evaluate them as smart or not, and having them choose whether they would be like the Cock or the Hare. Only when Hare has been picked out as the mad one, and the students have opted for being like the Cock, she starts talking about his thoughtless imitation. He died from it, and so they should not just imitate what somebody is doing.

While the questions are known-information questions in the sense that Patouma knows the answer before asking, the content of the answers has not been talked about before in the session. It is in this way new to the students, and she does not expect them to remember something she has said before. Instead she challenges them to come up with the answers by building on the story, which she now has told twice, once continuously, and once with breaks to check comprehension of key words and concepts. Her strategies are all in all meant to draw out real responses from the students, not to get back a predefined text already presented by the teacher. When she does not get any responses to more loosely



formulated questions, she rephrases and brings in other aspects, till she reaches a point where she can bring in the danger of imitating heedlessly. After the final admonitions of being smart and not imitate, she uses a quite typical school way of ending a lecture by asking ‘Do you understand?’ (see 8.2.6 on page 323.) She had used the same question in the very beginning of the session when she talked about the difference between tales and riddles, explaining the French words with the corresponding Nizaa words. Her use of this question is thus quite parallel to the use of *Vous avez compris?* as a marker of lecturing sequences, see 8.2.6 on page 323. The response from the students is markedly less formalistic, though, they use different forms of saying yes and respond singly, not in chorus.

In this session Patouma blends the ways of speaking from the two contexts. She takes the idea of questions from the school context and uses a Nizaa equivalent of a common school question (*Vous avez compris?* ‘*Diwu wááwa*’ *rà ?* in two or three slightly different versions), but she asks ‘real’ questions in the sense that there are several options for answering, not only a previously defined and memorised text. Her comprehension checks are real as well, and she rephrases questions when she realises that they are too complex.

It is easy to see one reason why she can use different patterns from the standard ones in school: she speaks the same language as the students. She can actually build understanding of a theme and truly check on it, something which most teachers can never do as long as they use only French in classroom interaction.

#### 8.3.3 The speech genres at school

I showed earlier, in Chapter 7, how classes easily become communities of practice as the *redoublants* from last year become knowledgeable participants in school practices. In their engagement to ‘do school’, the students and the teacher develop repertoires of communication, including speech genres as typical formulations and expressions used in classroom talk.

In the present chapter so far, I have shown how the conceptualisations of such repeated and common expressions partly concern the unfolding of interaction, and that these conceptualisations of the meaning can become entrenched with the expressed form. I have pointed out the emergent character of these language use patterns, and the fact that the students often are way behind the teacher in his use of different speech genres. This frequently leads to their struggling to keep up with what is going on.

Speech genres are important by creating discourse expectations: a certain introductory formula that everybody knows will lead to a certain content coming next can considerably ease the strain of learning, and of interaction generally. In the session analysed here, the use of *Repetez!* or *Allez-y!* have this entrenched character: everybody takes it to mean that they shall repeat what the teacher just

said, and they have little trouble doing it under normal circumstances. However, when the teacher uses this expression in an unfamiliar way by making a ‘hanging’ sentence which a student shall both repeat and complete, he is in trouble (see 8.2.4).

Other schemas which can be abstracted here from the teacher’s use of certain expressions have simply not yet registered with most of the children in his class, though some students are able to follow. The schemas have an emergent character and a close relation to the interactional context, and provide graphic illustrations of how linguistic structures are both epiphenomenal to language in use and still are forcefully shaping the negotiation of meaning (Hopper 1998).

As the children come to learn new speech genres at school, they increasingly lead double lives with quite different ways of being. Normally these two ways are kept apart, but creating school-like contexts at home, such as a literacy class, can bring practices from school into contact with other people. In the same way speech genres of the village such as telling tales and doing riddles can bring out new, hybrid speech genres in the school context. Such blends are much easier to handle using the first language of the students, which means that they have a much fuller understanding of what is going on, and more options in interaction. Current research on the medium of instruction in schools clearly points in this direction.

In this chapter I have presented indepth microanalyses of teaching and learning interactions that illustrate the emergent character of linguistic structures through the application of speech genres in a cognitive linguistics framework.

## Chapter 9

### Summary and conclusions. New perspectives

“Everyone is talking and writing about language these days, but there is little agreement on how it works.”

— Palmer (1996, 1)

In the preceding chapters I laid out my contribution to that ever-present challenge: to discover how language works. My point of departure was a usage-based theory of language, that of cognitive linguistics. Using the analytical tool of speech genres I embedded my study of interactions of teaching and learning in a Cameroon village and school within the theory of communities of practice. Moreover, methodologically I have built on participant observation in addition to my video-recorded data. The ethnography of communication along with perspectives from language socialization studies have guided my data analysis thus ensuring a rich interpretation of meaning. The research questions that have guided my work are repeated below:

1. How are speech genres used as cognitive and social resources in teaching and learning interaction?
2. How can the concept of speech genres contribute to develop the theoretical purview of cognitive linguistics?
3. How can typical forms of teaching and learning interaction be seen as emergent schematic structures of language?

In the following section 9.1 I shall summarise my findings from the analyses in Chapters 5, 7 and 8, before I point to some implications of my work in 9.2.

## 9.1 Summary

In order to reply to the research questions of the present study, I gave a close analysis of interaction in a village setting of teaching and learning in Chapter 5 and an equally close analysis of interaction in school classes in Chapters 7 and 8, with the concept of speech genres as the main analytical category. The perspectives of community of practice theory played an important role in my description of learning processes in both of these settings, as I showed that learning takes place on many levels in the interaction and only some of it comes out of explicit teaching sequences. Furthermore, I take learning to be scaffolded by the ways of speaking typically used in the recurrent situations of learning in both everyday life and at school. It is these schematic ways of forming utterances that have been labelled speech genres. Using a cognitive linguistics approach to language and language use, I understand these to be schematic symbolic structures with meanings closely tied to the interactional situation itself.

### 9.1.1 Speech genres as social and cognitive resources

Teaching and learning interaction is found both in the village outside of the classroom as well as in the classroom. Both types of setting also show that speech genres do come to play a role in such interactions, as social and cognitive resources. Situated learning takes place through interaction, and knowledge management occurs through participation as well as reification (Wenger 1998)

#### **In the village**

Instances of teaching interaction were fewer in my village data, but learning takes place also without explicit teaching. The community of practice perspective shows how small children grow into practices of doing tasks in the family, learning lifeskills as they go along. In more focused teaching interactions, a speech genre of demonstration and observation was identified, where the learner's part consisted of intent observation, while the expert used her talk to point out important acts in her demonstration.

In the games played by children, a number of speech genres come to the fore as *secondary speech genres* (Bakhtin 1986, 62), related not directly to the reality of the children, but to the play world they create with their game. In the fictive world of tales there is a parallel secondary usage of speech genres, taken from their primary usage in every-day conversation. Such double usage of speech genres functions both as models of how to speak and do in certain situations, and give more resonance to every-day conversation. Riddlegames constitute another

## 9.1. SUMMARY

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typical village speech genre of teaching, but both tales and riddles teach their lessons implicitly rather than explicitly.

The speech genres of the villages learning situations are built to help the learner cope with her task of learning. The speech genre of demonstration points out important phases in the skill demonstrated, tales and games on the other hand demonstrate both language usage and take up cultural themes. Riddles often bring in a fresh view of the world, using analogies of shape or behaviour to train children to look at things in different ways. As part of the larger cultural context, all of these genres serve to build a common and integrative frame of reference for the children.

### **At school**

The typical situation of a Cameroonian rural area first-grade school class is the following: the majority of the students do not know the language used as the medium of instruction when they start school. The teacher may or may not share a language with his students; this is in any case believed to be irrelevant by most educators as the official medium of instruction is considered adequate for teaching.

Not all the students present in a first-grade class will be total newcomers to school, though. There will usually be a substantial group of 'redoers', students that failed to pass the entrance tests for the second grade and now do first grade once more. These students know school practices and some French and act as knowledgeable core members of the new class configuration. The new students often take their cue from what the more knowledgeable members of class do, entering into participation in the practice through imitation. The teacher also supports the process of integration as he engages with his students and draw them into participating in the classroom practices. In this way, classes turn into communities of practice fairly quickly, starting to build a shared repertoire of communication to engage with their enterprise of 'doing school'. I claim that the speech genres described in the previous chapter of the dissertation are typical examples of such a repertoire of communication.

The speech genres of the teaching and learning interaction identified in Chapter 8 were students' completion of the teacher's incomplete sentences, modeling and imitation sequences, elicitation questioning sequences for presentation, rehearsal and performance of target texts, lecturing and explanation by the teacher, listings of target texts and some sectioning devices (discourse markers) typically tied to different speech genres. The list is not meant to be exhaustive; speech genres are not a closed class of linguistic units.

In the practice of the classroom, recurrent utterances, or recurrent commonalities of different utterances, come to be social and cognitive resources for the

students. They can recognise what is going on through the teacher's use of typical forms, combined with other students' responses, even though they may have very shallow understandings of the meanings involved at first. Meaning is built through many usage events, in the form of cognitive schemas abstracting the commonalities through generalisation.

Such schemas will contain the recurrent verbal and non-verbal channels of the forms used, together with the different conceptualisation channels of Objective situation, Information structure and Speech management. Conceptualisations will grow as the typical forms are used and become increasingly meaningful to the students. In this way, the students can use these meaningful practices and speech genres as resources for coping with the demands of the interaction going on, both directly as models for language use and more indirectly as they point to other items to be learned.

An example of this double utility can be the typical forms associated with the speech genre of modeling and imitation of French words and sentences. The teacher will typically say *Répétez!* or *Répète!* according to whether he speaks to the whole class or to one student, thus creating concrete and comprehensible models for the use of these two different forms. At the same time the words are used for making the students attend to some other French item and get them to participate in a (chorus or individual) rehearsal of this item. As such they are salient interactional tools, showing the students how to proceed from that specific point. Speech genres become in this way both social and cognitive resources for the students.

However, in Chapter 8 I also demonstrated how mixing of speech genres can be problematic for the students when they have different conceptualisations of a speech genre as compared to the teacher. Each instance of use, also those deemed less successful, will nevertheless become part of the total history of use, and the schematic symbolic structure will continue to develop.

Finally at this point, I would like to draw attention to the local and contingent character of the speech genres analysed in the present work. Though many will be found in most classes, that does not mean that it is really the same structure, or that some predefined form exists which should be thought of as the target form of the genre. Instead, taking seriously the emergent character of all linguistic structures, I see them as eminently temporary and only immanently manifest in the instances of their use. This last point is important for the reply to the third research question of the dissertation: How the typical forms of teaching and learning interaction can be seen as emergent schematic structures of language, which will be addressed in 9.1.3.

### 9.1.2 Taking cognitive linguistics into unknown waters

The second research question of the present study was to see how the concept of speech genres can contribute to the theoretical development of cognitive linguistics. Furthermore I wanted to apply the cognitive linguistics paradigm more generally to a field where it has been rarely used: that of language use in actual social interaction.

In order to do so, I brought in the work of Bakhtin, with his vision of speech communication as heteroglossic, dialogic and filled with the intentions and responsiveness of people. His notion of speech genres is ripe with the tension between the freedom which comes with a mastery of the appropriate genres and the constraints put on the speaker from these sometimes rigid forms of utterances. Speech genres are forms of utterances (not of sentences), and “to learn to speak means to learn to construct utterances” (Bakhtin 1986, 78).

As pointed out in Section 2.2, Bakhtin’s idea of speech genres foreshadows the way cognitive linguistics have come to see linguistic structure. From the point of view presented in 1.1.1, cognitive linguistics is well poised to use the rich notion of speech genres in the study of interaction, and so I have proceeded to do in the present study. However, other frameworks with a longstanding research tradition in the field of interactional and discourse analysis have rich insights which also should be brought into such a study. I used all of the frameworks presented in Chapter 2 in an integrated approach to my data, though the community of practice is most visible in the resulting analysis together with cognitive linguistics.

### 9.1.3 Speech genres as emergent schematic structures

My third research question concerned how typical forms of teaching and learning can be seen as emergent schematic structures of language. In a certain sense the village setting data are less illustrative in this respect: they portray quite normal language acquisition processes of a first language, and so run parallel to a multitude of other studies on this theme.

The school data are different here, because of the use of an unknown language as the only legitimate language in school interaction, hence it gives a graphic illustration of the processes involved. The next subsection will elaborate this idea.

#### **Emergent language in school classes**

Unlike more prototypical communities of practice, the school classes in my study cannot build on a common language as a ready-made instrument of communication. Wenger (1998, 82–83) lists a number of linguistic and material resources typically entering the repertoire of a community, from arrangements of

seating to tools, stories, technical terms and genres, but he does not mention that basic instrument, a common language for communication, only the ‘special cases’ of linguistic practices developed by the community in question.

The situation described above, however, quite graphically illustrates that all of language comprises emergent structures. It is not only the smaller adjustments made in particular groups that are historically and socially contingent, but language is all over made up of the always changing products of a neverending history of use. Hence, a language should not be taken for granted as “structural units arranged in patterns determined by grammatical rules” to cite Hopper (1998, 155), though it might appear as if Wenger implicitly does just that.

When a school class quite literally does not have a language in common (at least not in common between the students and that core member, the teacher) they must start to build the whole array of language conventions, not only redefine some items of an already well-known system. The students necessarily build on the language use they meet in the interaction of the classroom, picking up meanings and forms as they go along. Of course, much of the classroom interaction is specifically geared to teach such conventions. Furthermore, the community of practice of this class will build on the resources they have (including emergent French comprehension) in order to communicate; it is a dynamic process. Still, each student must form cognitive schemas of her own on which she can base new understandings and find ways to express herself in this new language. The students come to know the existing conventions normally labelled by ‘French’, and come to share them with the larger francophone speech community, but they do so by learning the bits and pieces and relate them to their own experiences with those linguistic elements.

Speech genres by their close relation to the structure of context, make this process visible in the interaction. The identification of speech genre schemas in developing communities of practice highlights the process of how linguistic structures can emerge from many usage events.

I noted in Chapter 1 the existence of a fundamental division in linguistic theory between the idea that language is an innate faculty with a universal grammar and the idea that language structures grow from usage. Hopper (1998) labels the two as A-Priori and Emergent Grammar respectively. In demonstrating the unstable and growing character of the speech genres in the classroom interaction, this study provides input to that important debate, with data belonging on the Emergent Grammar side.



## 9.2 Implications of my work

I noted above a certain lack of cognitive linguistics studies in the field of interactional studies, and in the use of empirical data generally. That situation is rapidly changing, though: as noted in 2.6 a number of studies have been produced in the last few years aiming to integrate other research traditions with the cognitive linguistics paradigm, discourse analysis and interaction studies among them.

To my mind, this is a very important turn in cognitive linguistics. The idea of a usage-based grammar has existed for years, but many researchers have been slow to take the plunge into the use of naturally occurring language use as data. This should not be restricted to studies of lexical choice and the construals to be read from them, as e.g. Croft does in his analysis of the ‘Pear stories’ (Croft 2007). Cognitive linguists need to discover how meaning is construed *in interaction*. There is a rich field of study here, and cognitive linguists can both learn more about language in cognition and bring new perspectives to interaction studies by engaging with it.

A further contribution of this dissertation lies in the nature of my data, in two ways. In the first place, they concern language use in teaching and learning interaction in Cameroon. The identification of speech genres in such contexts brings new information on how learning happens in an African context in which the medium of instruction is an earlier colonial language.

In the second place, I present data from two hitherto little described settings of language use in Cameroon, a village setting and a public school setting within the same area. The analysis of classroom practice from a community of practice point of view is also new in Cameroon. Speech genres are here seen as part of the shared repertoire of the community. By investigating the issues of teaching and learning in these contexts, my study presents material of societal interest to Cameroon, and of interest to educators more generally.

Lastly I document the Nizaa language as actually used in different situations, with a translation to English. Very little in this way has been published before, as the publications of the Centre Littérature Nizaa are monolingual in Nizaa, and other published works (Endresen 1990/1991, Endresen 1992, Endresen 1999, Kjelsvik 2002) have presented aspects of the Nizaa grammar with example sentences, not longer stretches of texts or discourse. The documentation of a rich children’s peer culture in Nizaa was another important goal of this dissertation and is also a contribution to the research on the role of children’s cultural expressions in Cameroon. Hence through this dissertation which has taken as its part of departure some basic theoretical perspectives in the study of language, the documentation of a little known culture has been accomplished.

The need for further research on interaction in Cameroonian and African classrooms is obvious. The issues of learning achievement, of identity formation,

of relations between the school and the parents, of cognitive development and a host of other questions present themselves to mind, alongside the more linguistic aspects of the situation which have occupied us in this dissertation. Such issues can be addressed along the same lines as the present work, but also within other research fields of pedagogy and psychology. The place of language issues within these complex questions is, however, a central one, not the least because of the persistence in Africa of using the old colonial languages as the medium of instruction.

The further study of children's culture is another research task which should get priority, before such practices disappear under the pressure of the modern society. I have brought forward a fragment of the Nizaa children's culture, but much more exists. This would also require a deeper insight into theoretical approaches to play and games.

# Appendix A

## Nizaa game transcript

**Note:**

In the appendices A and B are found complete transcripts of interactions where only excerpts have been used in the dissertation text. In Appendix A, the transcripts are spread out on facing pages, so that the Nizaa version is on the left page and the English version on the right page. In Appendix B, each turn in French is followed by the English version.

Appendix C contains lists of the videorecordings and the teacher questionnaire used to gather data.

## A.1 Games recorded 11th February 2006

**Transcript A.1** *Díí mi yéé raa—Sister, I want some fire.*

- (0) **Start situation:** 00.00.00 (*After a minute or so of getting organised into a circle, 10 children are standing in the circle. His little sister Asta toddles around the circle, other children are about, a nonplaying boy is inside the circle, Linda approaches outside. Patouma, her mother, sits in a chair just outside the circle, watching them. Maayí is nearby. Other children are around, one older boy, Ibi, is seated by the house behind the circle. Manga has finished pl. 1 and 2 and walks to Pl. 3.*)
- (1) **Manga:** 00.01.2 (*leaving Pl.2, asks Pl.3 in Fulfulde*) “Adda, mi yidí yiite.”
- (2) **Pl.3 girl:** 00.02.3 (*unintelligible, in Fulfulde?*)=“xx xx xx”= (*the nonplayer suddenly slips out of circle, shouts to Asta*)(00.03.3 *Bk breaks in speaking French: Ça commence comment? (she gets no response)*
- (3) **Manga:** 00.03.8 (*Manga moves to Pl.4, overlaps with bk who ends on 00.04.2*) (*asks player 4, in Fulfulde*) “Adda, mi yidí yiite.” (*Linda moves towards Patouma outside circle*)
- (4) **Pl.4 boy:** 00.04.8 (*Asta trundles after her big brother in the circle*)“xx xx xx.” (*answer unintelligible, but seems same as Pl.3’s*)
- (5) **Pl.5 boy:** 00.06.2 (*whispers loudly to Asta as she approaches her brother*) Asta! (*outside Linda reaches her mother, who greets her with a smile*)
- (6) **Manga:** 00.06.9 (*to Pl.5*) “Adda, mi yidí yiite.” (*most of the players look at Asta reaching up to her brother. Bk breaks in again and overlaps: Le- les trop petites-*)
- (7) **Patouma:** 00.08.1 (*partly in Fulfulde, pushes Linda to a place in the circle just in front of herself,*) =waawa Yóghamtáa waala, useni.
- (8) **Pl.5 boy:** 00.10.0 (*inaudible*) “xx xx xx.”. (*Linda joins the circle*)
- (9) **Maayí:** 00.10.1 (*speaks from some distance, then comes closer and gets the players attention; speaking Nizaa*) Nàw wam á píŋjí lèè dey (*Pl.1 leaves his place to fetch Asta out of the circle, Pl.2 keeps his hand outstretched waiting for him. Ibi by the wall simultaneously walks over to Linda to arrange the hands of the players holding on to her arms, then returns to his seat.*) Móówu à píŋjí lèè dey (*inaudible, several overlapping voices, she goes toward house by camera*)- móówu à píŋjína`, díí à kaŋ ní kew níci mi mboróó ré~ [0.1] (*takes a handful of straw from the roof, shouts to Manga*) Manga, hey!, Manga he! (*walks into circle*) [1.0] Móówu píŋjí lèè dē [0.9] (*holds up straw to Pl.2 in circle and speaking Nizaa*) “Díí, mi yéé raa.” [0.4]

- (0) **Start situation:** 00.00.00 (*10 children standing in circle. His little sister Asta toddles around the circle, other children are about, a nonplaying boy is inside the circle, Linda approaches outside. Patouma, her mother, sits in a chair just outside the circle, watching them. Maayí is nearby. Other children are around, one older boy, Ibi, is seated by the house behind the circle. Manga has finished pl. 1 and 2 and walks to Pl. 3.*)
- (1) **Manga:** 00.01.2 (*leaving Pl.2, asks Pl.3 in Fulfulde*) “Sister, I want some fire.”
- (2) **Pl.3 girl:** 00.02.3 (*unintelligible, in Fulfulde?*)=“xx xx xx”= (*the nonplayer suddenly slips out of circle, shouts to Asta*)(00.03.3 *Bk breaks in speaking French: How does it start? (she gets no response)*)
- (3) **Manga:** 00.03.8 (*Manga moves to Pl.4, overlaps with bk who ends on 00.04.2*) (*asks player 4*) “Sister, I want some fire,” (*outside Linda moves towards Patouma outside circle*)
- (4) **Pl.4 boy:** 00.04.8 (*Asta trundles after her big brother in the circle*) “xx xx xx.” (*answers unintelligible, but seems same as Pl.3’s*)
- (5) **Pl.5 boy:** 00.06.2 (*whispers loudly to Asta as she approaches her brother*) Asta! (*Linda reaches her mother, who greets her with a smile*)
- (6) **Manga:** 00.06.9 (*to Pl.5*) “Sister, I want some fire,” (*most of the players look at Asta, who reaches up to her brother. Bk breaks in again and overlaps speaking French: Those who are too small-*)
- (7) **Patouma:** 00.08.1 (*partly in Fulfulde, pushes Linda to a place in the circle just in front of herself,*) =xx xx Yóghamtáá agree(?), please.
- (8) **Pl.5 boy:** 00.10.0 (*inaudible*) “xx xx xx.” (*Linda joins the circle*)
- (9) **Maayí:** 00.10.1 (*speaks from some distance, then comes closer and gets the players attention; speaking Nizaa*) One should do like this, you know! (*Pl.1 leaves his place to fetch Asta out of the circle, Pl.2 keeps his hand outstretched waiting for him. Ibi by the wall simultaneously walks over to Linda to arrange the hands of the players holding on to her arms, then returns to his seat.*) People do like this, see? (*partly inaudible, several overlapping voices, she goes toward house by camera*)- one’s doing it, sister has recorded a newly invented thing(?) for me [0.1] (*takes a handful of straw from the roof, shouts to Manga*) Manga, hey!, Manga he! (*walks into circle*) [1.0] One does like this, see! [0.9] (*holds up straw to Pl.2 in circle and speaking Nizaa*) “Sister, I want some fire.” [0.4]

- (10) **Severall:** 00.22.8 (*Manḡa laughs delightedly, others follow, Manḡa reaches for the strawbunch in his mother's hand, she ignores him looking at Pl.2. Behind her, Pl.1 joins the gap in the circle again*)
- (11) **Maayí:** 00.24.6 (*uncertain translation*) À wú se làà jáwru lóó raaná` , fààṅ daà, fààṅ daà, fààṅ daà ka dib ré~ [0.2] (*shifts gaze to Pl.3, holds straw up to her*) “Díí, mi yéé raa.”
- (12) **Patouma:** 00.29.2 ‘Bu nyiṅcí seena` , à cééṅcí à wú seena` lo` .
- (13) **Maayí:** 00.31.2 (*straightens up, gives straw to Manḡa*) To, cééṅcí à wú sééna` . (*Patouma overlaps, inaudible*) [1.0]
- (14) **Maayí:** 00.33.4 (*partly unintelligible sentence as she crosses circle*) Dina wóó nitam màá mi rii jèè.
- (15) **Manḡa:** 00.35.2 (*starts on Pl.1 again, players attention on him*) “Adda, mi yidi yiite”= (*no audible answer*)
- (16) **Patouma:** 00.36.1 =Nyin` nízaana` !=
- (17) **Maayí:** 00.36.6 (*overlapping*) Nyín nyem-nyem ré~ (*leaves circle and turns to look*) [1.4]
- (18) **Manḡa:** 00.38.8 (*moves over to Pl.2, thrust the straws towards him*) “Mi yéé raa-Díí, mi yéé raa!” [0.8]
- (19) **Pl.2 boy:** 00.40.5 (*makes amused snort*) “Raa fá.” (*smiles*) [0.4]
- (20) **Maayí:** 00.42.0 (*from outside circle*) Àéé. [0.5]
- (21) **Manḡa:** 00.42.7 (*moves over to Pl.3 girl, holding his straw with both hands towards her*) “Díí, mi yéé raa!” [0.2]
- (22) **Pl.3 girl:** 00.43.5 (*dips knees slightly as she speaks*) “Raa fá.” [1.1]
- (23) **Manḡa:** 00.45.2 (*going to Pl.4*) “Díí, mi yéé raa!” [0.2]
- (24) **Pl.4 boy:** 00.45.9 (*looks towards next player as he speaks*) “Raa fá.” [0.9]
- (25) **Manḡa:** 00.47.3 (*turns to Pl.5*) “Díí, mi yéé raa!” [0.2]
- (26) **Maayí:** 00.47.8 (*speaks from outside the circle, Manḡa looks at her; the other players keep their attention on Manḡa. Pl.5 answers inaudibly during her turn*) “Mi suu cáṅw dóoṅ raaná` fà- fààṅ daw ge yíí diwwà.” [0.3]
- (27) **Manḡa:** 00.50.5 (*turns to Pl.*) “Díí, mi yéé raa!” [0.5]

- (10) **Severall:** 00.22.8 (*Manja laughs delightedly, others follow, Manja reaches for the strawbunch in his mother's hand, she ignores him looking at Pl.2. Behind her, Pl.1 joins the gap in the circle again*)
- (11) **Maayí:** 00.24.6 (*uncertain translation*) It is how jawro(?) runs for fire, lest brother, lest brother, lest brother take it and leaves. [0.2] (*shifts gaze to Pl.3, holds straw up to her*) "Sister, I want some fire."
- (12) **Patouma:** 00.29.2 They speak Fulfulde, (we) should forbid to speak in Fulfulde so.
- (13) **Maayí:** 00.31.2 (*straightens up, gives straw to Manja*) Okay, don't speak Fulfulde. (*Patouma overlaps, inaudible*) [1.0]
- (14) **Maayí:** 00.33.4 (*partly unintelligible sentence as she crosses circle*), (translation unavailable)
- (15) **Manja:** 00.35.2 (*starts on Pl.1 again, players attention on back on him*) "Sister, I want some fire"= (*no audible answer*)
- (16) **Patouma:** 00.36.1 =Speak in Nizaa!=
- (17) **Maayí:** 00.36.6 (*overlapping*) =Speak Nyem-nyem! (*leaves circle and turns to look*) [1.4]
- (18) **Manja:** 00.38.8 (*moves over to Pl.2, thrust the straws towards him*) "I want fire-Sister, I want some fire!" [0.8]
- (19) **Pl.2 boy:** 00.40.5 (*makes amused snort*) "There is no fire." (*smiles*) [0.4]
- (20) **Maayí:** 00.42.0 (*from outside circle*) Aye. [0.5]
- (21) **Manja:** 00.42.7 (*moves over to Pl.3 girl, holding his straw with both hands towards her*) "Sister, I want some fire." [0.2]
- (22) **Pl.3 girl:** 00.43.5 (*dips knees slightly as she speaks*) "There is no fire." [1.1]
- (23) **Manja:** 00.45.2 (*going to Pl.4*) "Sister, I want some fire." [0.2]
- (24) **Pl.4 boy:** 00.45.9 (*looks towards next player as he speaks*) "There is no fire." [0.9]
- (25) **Manja:** 00.47.3 (*turns to Pl.5*) "Sister, I want some fire." [0.2]
- (26) **Maayí:** 00.47.8 (*speaks from outside the circle, Manja looks at her, the other players keep their attention on Manja. Pl.5 answers inaudibly during her turn*) "I refuse since my sauce is on the fire, lest (you) touch to steal and make off with it." [0.3]
- (27) **Manja:** 00.50.5 (*turns to Pl.6*) "Sister, I want some fire." [0.5]

- (28) **Pl.6 girl:** 00.51.7 (*smiling broadly*)“Fààŋ wu ge yí diwwà!” [0.4]
- (29) **Maŋga:** 00.53.4 (*continues to Pl.7, who smiles and laughs*) “Díí, mi yéé raa!” [1.0]
- (30) **Pl.7 girl:** 00.55.2 “Fààŋ wu ge yí diwwá!” (*giggles*)
- (31) **Maŋga:** 00.56.9 (*to Linda, bowing down*) “Díí, mi yéé raa!” [0.5]
- (32) **Patouma:** 00.57.7 (*sitting right behind Linda*) “Raà fá.” [0.4]
- (33) **Pl.8 Linda:** 00.58.7 “Raà fá.” [0.7] (*all the girls around her have turned towards her, smiling, Maŋga smiles as he straightens up again, Patouma smiles behind her*)
- (34) **Pl.6 girl:** 01.00.64 (*laughingly*) Hn?
- (35) **Maŋga:** 01.00.6 (*continues to his younger sister Halima, Pl.9, smiling as he asks*) “Díí, mi yéé raa!”=
- (36) **Pl.6 girl:** 01.01.2 (*overlaps out of turn, giggling over Linda’s answer, Pl.7 besides her dips nearly to the ground, laughing*) =xx raà fá!=
- (37) **Pl.9 Halima:** 01.01.8 (*overlapping with Pl.6, partly inaudible. Her mother has approached quietly behind her back, listens and turns contently away as Halima answers*) =“ge yí diwwà!” [0.7]
- (38) **Maŋga:** 01.03.2 (*to Pl.10 girl*) “Díí, mi yéé raa!” [0.3]
- (39) **Pl.10 girl:** 01.03.9 “Fààŋ wu ge yí diwwà.” [0.2]
- (40) **Maŋga:** 01.05.3 (*continues to Pl.11, boy*) “Díí, mi yéé raa!” [0.3]
- (41) **Pl.11 boy:** 01.06.3 (*unintelligible, different from the preceding answers*) “xx xxx xxxx xx” [0.5]
- (42) **Maŋga:** 01.08.9 (*continues to Pl.12, boy*) “Díí, mi yéé raa!”
- (43) **Pl.12 boy:** 01.09.7 (*unintelligible, also different*) “xx xxx xxxx xx” (*ends laughing.*)
- (44) **Maŋga:** 01.11.7 (*Maŋga turns toward middle of circle and throws his straws ‘angrily’ on the ground*) [1.6]
- (45) **bk:** 01.12.7 To! [0.2]
- (46) **Maayí:** 01.13.3 To` , xx xx (*rest unintelligible, overlapping voices . Maŋga turns again, backs to one side of circle and opens his arms wide, the circle shuffles outward in response*)



- (28) **Pl.6 girl:** 00.51.7 (*smiling broadly*) “Lest you steal and make off with it.” [0.4]
- (29) **Majga:** 00.53.4 (*continues to Pl.7, who smiles and laughs*) “Sister, I want some fire.” [1.0]
- (30) **Pl.7 girl:** 00.55.2 “Lest you steal and make off with it.” (*giggles*)
- (31) **Majga:** 00.56.9 (*to Linda, bowing down*) “Sister, I want some fire.” [0.5]
- (32) **Patouma:** 00.57.7 (*sitting right behind Linda*) “There is no fire.” [0.4]
- (33) **Pl.8 Linda:** 00.58.7 “There is no fire.” [0.7] (*all the girls around her have turned towards her, smiling, Majga smiles as he straightens up again, Patouma smiles behind her*)
- (34) **Pl.6 girl:** 01.00.64 (*laughingly*) Hn?
- (35) **Majga:** 01.00.6 (*continues to his younger sister Halima, Pl.9, smiling as he asks*) “Sister, I want some fire.”=
- (36) **Pl.6 girl:** 01.01.2 (*overlaps out of turn, giggling over Linda’s answer, Pl.7 besides her dips nearly to the ground, laughing*) =xx “There is no fire.” !=
- (37) **Pl.9 Halima:** 01.01.8 (*overlapping with Pl.6, partly inaudible. Her mother has approached quietly behind her back, listens and turns contently away as Halima answers*) “=steal and make off with it!” [0.7]
- (38) **Majga:** 01.03.2 (*to Pl.10 girl*) “Sister, I want some fire.” [0.3]
- (39) **Pl.10 girl:** 01.03.9 “Lest you steal and make off with it.” [0.2]
- (40) **Majga:** 01.05.3 (*continues to Pl.11, boy*) “Sister, I want some fire.” [0.3]
- (41) **Pl.11 boy:** 01.06.3 (*unintelligible, different from the preceding answers*) “xx xxx xxxx xx” [0.5]
- (42) **Majga:** 01.08.9 (*continues to Pl.12, boy*) “Sister, I want some fire.”
- (43) **Pl.12 boy:** 01.09.7 (*unintelligible, also different*) “xx xxx xxxx xx” (*ends laughing*)
- (44) **Majga:** 01.11.7 (*Majga turns toward middle of circle and throws his straws ‘angrily’ on the ground*) [1.6]
- (45) **bk:** 01.12.7 Okay! [0.2]
- (46) **Maayí:** 01.13.3 Okay-, xx xx (*rest inaudible, overlapping voices. Majga turns again, backs to one side of circle and opens his arms wide, the circle shuffles outward in response*)

- (47) **Manga:** 01.16.7 (*loudly*) “Óó baa dii!” [0.3]  
 (48) **Circle:** 01.18.0 (*chorus response*) “Bàà dīngí, dīngi, dīngì.” [0.3]  
 (49) **Manga:** 01.20.1 (*loudly*) “Óó baa dii!” (*laughter from the players, Pl.6 moves a waterbucket behind her out of the way*) [0.2]  
 (50) **Circle:** 01.21.3 (*chorus response*) “Bàà dīngí gidingi dīng.”  
 (51) **Several:** 01.22.9 (*Manga suddenly walks over and points at the link between Pl.3 girl, and Pl.2 boy, then the link with Pl.4 boy. Several speak, Pl.3 throws off Pl.4’s hand, then they rejoin, Pl.1 (oldest player present) comes over and arranges hands (one player holding onto the forearm of the other), Maayí comments something, all resume their places.*)  
 (52) **Manga:** 01.33.3 (*backs off to side of circle again; loudly*) “Óó baa dii!”  
 (53) **Circle:** 01.34.1 (*chorus response*) “Bàà dīngí, dīngi, dīng.”  
 (54) **Manga:** 01.36.0 (*beats hands outwards again, at waistheight; loudly in Fulfulde*) “Sannu wurtataa?” [0.1]  
 (55) **Circle:** 01.37.2 (*chorus response, answering the challenge, unintelligible*) “Twèé má síiro.” [0.5]  
 (56) **Manga:** 01.39.2 “OÓb!- (*runs across circle and throws himself on the joined arms of Pl.’s 1 and 2*) [0.2] -baa di.” (*does not get through*)  
 (57) **Circle:** 01.40.6 (*chorus response*) “Bàà dīngí, dīngi, dīngì.” (*Asta trundles around inside the circle again, more or less following her big brother*) [2.3]  
 (58) **Manga:** 01.44.6 (*speaks loudly*) “Óó baa dii!” (*runs, throws himself on the joined arms of pl.’s 4 and 5 (boys), does not get through*)  
 (59) **Circle:** 01.45.9 (*chorus response*) “Bàà dīngí, dīngi, dīngì.”

[end of clip 01.48.1. The game goes on with some more outbreak attempts, one is directed to Linda and Pl. 7, but Manga goes very carefully to avoid hurting the little girl, and he doesn’t break out. Maayí stops the game and proposes another game before he has managed to break out.]

- (47) **Mangga:** 01.16.7 (*loudly*) “Óó baa dii!” [0.3]
- (48) **Circle:** 01.18.0 (*chorus response*) “Bàà dingí, dingi, dingì.” [0.3]
- (49) **Mangga:** 01.20.1 (*loudly*) “Óó baa dii!” (*laughter from the players, Pl.6 moves a waterbucket behind her out of the way*) [0.2]
- (50) **Circle:** 01.21.3 (*chorus response*) “Bàà dingí gidingi dìng”
- (51) **Several:** 01.22.9 (*Mangga suddenly walks over and points at the link between Pl.3 girl, and Pl.2 boy, then the link with Pl.4 boy. Several speak, Pl.3 throws off Pl.4’s hand, then they rejoin, Pl.1 (oldest player present) comes over and arranges hands (one player holding onto the forearm of the other), Maayi comments something, all resume their places.*)
- (52) **Mangga:** 01.33.3 (*backs off to side of circle again; loudly*) “Óó baa dii!”
- (53) **Circle:** 01.34.1 (*chorus response*) “Bàà dingí, dingi, dìng”
- (54) **Mangga:** 01.36.0 (*beats hands outwards again, at waistheight; loudly in Fulfulde*) “Hello, I don’t get out?” [0.1]
- (55) **Circle:** 01.37.2 (*chorus response, answering the challenge, Nizaa*) “Those days to stay and think” [0.5]
- (56) **Mangga:** 01.39.2 “OÓb!-(*runs across circle and throws himself on the joined arms of Pl.’s 1 and 2*) [0.2] -baa di.” (*does not get through*)
- (57) **Circle:** 01.40.6 (*chorus response*) “Bàà dingí, dingi, dingì.” (*Asta trundles around inside the circle again, more or less following her big brother*) [2.3]
- (58) **Mangga:** 01.44.6 (*speaks loudly*) “Óó baa dii!” (*runs, throws himself on the joined arms of pl.’s 4 and 5 (boys), does not get through*)
- (59) **Circle:** 01.45.9 (*chorus response*) “Bàà dingí, dingi, dingì.”

[end of clip 01.48.1 The game goes on with some more outbreak attempts, one is directed to Linda and Pl. 7, but Manga goes very carefully to avoid hurting the little girl, and he doesn’t break out. Maayi stops the game and proposes another game before he has managed to break out.]



# Appendix B

## School transcripts

### B.1 Practical Hygiene session

**Transcript B.1** *SIL & CP Mipom, Practical hygiene lesson 23 Feb. 2006*

- (1) **Teacher:** 0.0 (*teacher writes on blackboard*) Au marigot- (*completes writing with audible dot*) [1.8] Où encore? (*turns to class*) [2.1] On peut trouver l'eau au marigot, où encore. [0.7] On peut trouver l'eau encore où. [2.05] Hein? [0.9] Seulement au marigot? On a dit le matin que quoi; [0.2] Oui. [0.2]
- T: 0.0 (*teacher writes on blackboard*) At the stream- (*completes writing with audible dot*) [1.8] Where else? (*turns to class*) [2.1] One may find water at the stream, where else. [0.7] One may find water where else. [2.05] Hm? [0.9] Only at the stream? We said this morning that, what; [0.2] Yes. [0.2]
- (2) **Yacoubou:** 00.19.2 (*sitting*) Pompi<sup>1</sup> (*several smile*) [0.8]
- T: 00.19.2 (*sitting*) Pompi. (*several smile*) [0.8]
- (3) **Teacher:** 00.20.6 Non. [0.3] Le nom, on avait donné le nom le matin [0.3] que quoi. (*inaudible answer*) [1.4] Hein? (*Djoulde lifts hand*) [2.4] Le nom de pompi là, (*teacher points toward Djoulde, he start rising*) on avait donné ça le matin. (*Djoulde starts spaking, inaudible*) [0.4] Hein?
- T: 00.20.6 No. [0.3] The name, we gave the name this morning, [0.3] what was it. (*inaudible answer*) [1.4] Hm? (*Djoulde lifts hand*) [2.4] That name of pompi, (*teacher points toward Djoulde, he start rising*) we gave that in the morning. (*Djoulde starts spaking, inaudible*) [0.4] Hm?
- (4) **Djoulde:** 00.31.7 (*standing, overlapping*) - dans le puits. [0.2]
- T: 00.31.7 (*standing, overlapping*) -in the well. [0.2]
- (5) **Teacher:** 00.32.4 Hein?

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<sup>1</sup> 'Pompi' is a local word for the drill hole well in Galim and other larger villages. It is operated with a foot pump and delivers absolutely pure ground water.

T: 00.32.4 Hm?

(6) **Djoulde:** 00.32.7 (*standing*) Puits.

T: 00.32.7 (*standing*) Well.

(7) **Teacher:** 00.33.5 Dans le- [0.1] puits.[0.2] Au puits- [0.6] Oui? [0.8] (*start writing*) -au puits. [0.3] Oui, (*ends writing with an audible dot*) le nom de pompi là, on avait donné ça le matin, c'était quoi? [0.8] (*murmurs in class*) Vous avez déjà oublié? [4.9] (*some small talk, somebody says 'Oui'*) Pompi, c'est quoi? (*Yacoubou lifts hand*)[0.3] Oui. [2.1]

T: 00.33.5 In the- [0.1] well.[0.2] At the well- [0.6] Yes? [0.8] (*start writing*) -at the well. [0.3] Yes, (*ends writing with an audible dot*) that name of pompi, we gave that in the morning, what was it? [0.8] (*murmurs in class*) Have you forgotten already? [4.9] (*some small talk, somebody says 'Yes'*) Pompi, what's that? (*Yacoubou lifts hand*)[0.3] Yes. [2.1]

(8) **Yacoubou:** 00.51.0 (*stands up*) Forage. [0.4]

T: Drill hole

(9) **Teacher:** 00.52.2 Fooo- [0.8]

T: Drilll-

(10) **Yacoubou:** 00.52.8 =rage

T: 00.52.8 =hole

(11) **Teacher:** 00.53.7 Fooo-[0.1]

T: 00.53.7 Drilll-]

(12) **Students:** 00.54.3 (*inaudible*)

(13) **Teacher:** 00.55.6 Nh-nh. Pas forade. (*Yacoubou sits down, Djeera lifts hand*) Oui. [0.4]

T: 00.55.6 Nh-nh. Not drill hode. (*Yacoubou sits down, Djeera lifts hand*) Yes. [0.4]

(14) **Djeera:** 00.57.7 (*stands up*) Forag-e [0.3]

T: 00.57.7 (*stands up*) Drill hole. [0.3]

(15) **Teacher:** 00.58.9 Hein? [0.4]

T: 00.58.9 Hm? [0.4]

(16) **Djeera:** 00.59.7 Forag-e [0.3]

T: 00.59.7 Drill hole [0.3]

(17) **Teacher:** 01.00.7 Foraaag-e. (*Djeera sits down, teacher turns*) [0.2] C'est- [0.1] On peut trouver l'eau au foraaag-e. (*walks to bl.brd, writes*) [0.1] Ça c'est le pompe-là que vous dites là. Au foraaag-e. (*writes on bl.brd*) [2.0] Au forage- (*turns to class again*) [1.4] On peut trouver l'eau- [0.3] au marigot. [0.2] Hein? N'est-ce pas? [1.9] (*harshly, about bk and camera*) Ne regardez-pas a-là. regardez-lee- regardez-moi ici à la bouche. [1.6] On peut trouver l'eau au- [0.34] forage. On peut trouver l'eau au marii-[0.5] got. [0.2] On peut trouver l'eaau- [0.6] au- [0.2] puits. [0.1] (*lower voice, Fulfulde*) funndu [0.5]. (*normal voice*) funndu, c'est [0.4] le puits,

## B.1. PRACTICAL HYGIENE SESSION

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- [1.3] (*Fulfulde*) wawru. [0.2] C'est ça que vous appelez- [0.3] c'est lee- [0.4] puits.
- T: 01.00.7 Driilll hole. (*Djeera sits down, teacher turns*) [0.2] It is- [0.1] One may find water at the driilll hole. (*walks to bl.brd, writes*) [0.1] That is that pump that you talk about. At the driill hole. (*writes on bl.brd*) [2.0] At the drill hole- (*turns to class again*) [1.4] One may find water- [0.3] at the stream. [0.2] Hm? Isn't it? [1.9] (*harshly, about bk and camera*) Don't look at that. Look at thee- look at me here at my mouth. [1.6] One may find water at the- [0.34] drill hole. One may find water at the str- [0.5] -eam. [0.2] One may find water- [0.6] at- [0.2] the well.[0.1] (*lower voice, Fulfulde*) bunndu [0.5]. (*normal voice*) bunndu, it is [0.4] the well, [1.3] (*Fulfulde*) wawru. [0.2] That is what you call- [0.3] it is thee- [0.4] well.
- (18) **Somebody forward:** 01.38.5 (*very low*) Puits.
- T: 01.38.5 (*very low*) Well.
- ¶19) **Teacher:** 01.38.8 Forage, c'est le pompe, [0.4] hein? [0.1] que vous dites-là. [1.3] Le- [0.2] lee- [1.0] le forage. [1.3] Donc, y a- [2.0] les lieux [0.2] qu'où on peut trouver [0.2] de l'eau, [0.3] on trouve de l'eau (*rising tone*) au forage, [0.4] on peut trouver [0.2] l'eau (*rising tone*) au marigot, [0.4] on peut trouver l'eau [1.7] (*forceful ending*) au puits. [1.5] (*higher pitch*) On peut encore trouver l'eau- [1.1] (*normal pitch*) dans la mer, [0.4] hein? [1.6] On peut trouver l'eau dans la rivière, hein? c'est le-lele le marigot là, que vous dites là, hein? Y a beaucoup de lieux pour trouver de l'eau. [0.7] Bien! [2.8]
- T: 01.38.8 Drill hole, that is the pump, [0.4] hm? [0.1] that you talk about there. [1.3] The- [0.2] thee- [1.0] the drill hole. [1.3] Thus, there are- [2.0] the places [0.2] where one may find [0.2] water, [0.3] one find water (*rising tone*) at the drill hole, [0.4] on may find [0.2] water (*rising tone*) at the stream, [0.4] one may find water [1.7] (*forceful ending*) at the well. [1.5] (*higher pitch*) One may also find water- [1.1] (*normal pitch*) in the see, [0.4] hm? [1.6] One may find water in the river, hm? That is the- the-the stream there, that you talk about, hm? There are many places for finding water. [0.7] Well! [2.8]
- b. Comment est [0.1] l'eau [0.1] du marigot? [0.6] L'eau du marigot est comment? [2.0] Comment est l'eau du marigot! Ne regardez-pas ça, re-, [0.31] hein? [0.19] Répondez à la question, comment est l'eau du marigot? [0.2] Oumarou? [2.1]
- T: How is [0.1] the water [0.1] of the stream? [0.6] The water of the stream is how? [2.0] How is the water of the stream! Don't look at that, lo-, [0.3] hm? [0.1] Answer the question, how is the water at the stream? [0.2] Oumarou? [2.1]
- (20) **Oumarou:** 02.35.9 (*sitting*) Sale.
- T: 02.35.9 (*sitting*) Dirty.
- (21) **Teacher:** 02.36.8 Lèves toi! (*Oumarou stands up*) [2.0] Comment est l'eau du marigot? (*goes halfway down the aisle*) [1.5]
- T: 02.36.8 Stand up! (*Oumarou stands up*) [2.0] How is the water of the stream? (*goes*

- halfway down the aisle*) [1.5]
- (22) **Oumarou:** 02.41.1 (*looks away to his left, smiles*) Sale. [0.4]  
 T: 02.41.1 (*looks away to his left, smiles*) Dirty. [0.4]
- (23) **Teacher:** 02.42.0 Hein? [0.3]  
 T: 02.42.0 Hm? [0.3]
- (24) **Oumarou:** 02.42.7 (*turning more forward*) Sale. [1.2]  
 T: 02.42.7 (*turning more forward*) Dirty. [1.2]
- (25) **Teacher:** 02.44.4 Parles à haute voix! [0.8] L'eau du marigot est- [0.6]  
 T: 02.44.4 Speak up! [0.8] The water of the stream is- [0.6]
- (26) **Oumarou:** 02.47.8 (*looks down*) Sale [0.3] (*glances up at teacher*)  
 T: 02.47.8 (*looks down*) Dirty. [0.3] (*glances up at teacher*)
- (27) **Teacher:** 02.48.6 Repêtes! [1.4] L'eau du marigot est- [0.3]  
 T: 02.48.6 Repeat! [1.4] The water of the stream is- [0.3]
- (28) **Oumarou:** 02.51.8 (*looks forward, glances at camera*) Sale. [0.2]  
 T: 02.51.8 (*looks forward, glances at camera*) Dirty. [0.2]
- (29) **Teacher:** 02.52.4 Repêtes, (*overlapping talk forward in class, teacher does not react to it:*) l'eau du marigot est-  
 T: 02.52.4 Repeat, (*overlapping talk forward in class, teacher does not react to it:*) the water of the stream is-
- (30) **Srightomebody forward:** 02.54.3 =L'eau du mari-  
 T: 02.54.3 =The water of the stre-
- (31) **Oumarou:** 02.55.5 L'eau du marigot est- [0.7]  
 T: 02.55.5 The water of the stream is- [0.7]
- (32) **Teacher:** 02.57.9 -est comment alors? [0.1]  
 T: 02.57.9 -is how then? [0.1]
- (33) **Oumarou:** 02.58.7 (*looks around*) Sale. (*glances at teacher*) [1.4]  
 T: 02.58.7 (*looks around*) Dirty. (*glances at teacher*) [1.4]
- (34) **Issa:** 03.02.9 (*stands up besides Oumarou*) L'eau du marigot est sale. [0.2]  
 T: 03.02.9 (*stands up besides Oumarou*) The water of the stream is dirty. [0.2]
- (35) **Teacher:** 03.02.9 L'eau du marigot (*Issa sits down, Oumarou also*) eeest- [0.4] sssss- [0.3] est sale. [0.4] Hein? [0.5] L'eau du marigot est sale, oui, ce n'est, oui, ce- ce- c'eeest, c'est sale! [0.5] Oui- [0.3] Qui peut dire encore autre chose, l'eau du marigot n'est pas- [1.1] Est-ce que l'eau du marigot est propre? [0.7]  
 T: 03.02.9 The water of the stream (*Issa sits down, Oumarou also*) iiis- [0.4] dddd - [0.3] is dirty. [0.4] Hm? [0.5] The water of the stream is dirty, yes, it isn't, yes, it-it- it iiis, it is dirty! [0.5] Yes- [0.3] Who may say something else again, the water of the stream isn't- [1.1] Is the water of the stream clean? [0.7]
- (36) **Yacoubou:** 03.20.4 (*lifts hand, low voice*) C'est sale.  
 T: 03.20.4 (*lifts hand, low voice*) It is dirty.



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- (37) **Teacher:** 03.20.8 Hein? [0.7] (*to Yacoubou*) Oui. [0.4]  
T: 03.20.8 Hm? [0.7] (*to Yacoubou*) Yes. [0.4]
- (38) **Yacoubou:** 03.22.6 (*stands halfway up*) Non. (*sits down*) [0.5]  
T: 03.22.6 (*stands halfway up*) No. (*sits down*) [0.5]
- (39) **Teacher:** 03.23.6 Hein? [0.2]  
T: 03.23.6 Hm? [0.2]
- (40) **Yacoubou:** 03.24.1 (*sitting*) Non.  
T: 03.24.1 (*sitting*) No.
- (41) **Teacher:** 03.24.6 On, on dit comment. [1.4] Formez des phrases. L'eau (*Yacoubou stands up*) du marigot(?) n'est-  
T: 03.24.6 One, one say that how. [1.4] Form sentences. The water (*Yacoubou stands up*) of the stream(?) isn't-
- (42) **Yacoubou:** 03.29.1 (*standing*) marigot n'est pas [1.0]  
T: 3.29.1 (*standing*) stream isn't [1.0]
- (43) **Teacher:** 03.31.5 -n'est pas- [0.1]  
T: 03.31.5 -isn't- [0.1]
- (44) **Yacoubou:** 03.32.3 (*fairly low*) salé. (?) (*smiles, Iila at his side looks strangely at him*)  
T: 03.32.3 (*fairly low*) salty. (?) (*smiles, Iila at his side looks strangely at him*)
- 445) **Teacher:** 03.33.4 N'est pas clair! (*boy sits down, bows forward a moment, still smirking*) N'est pas propre. Très bien! [0.2] L'eau du marigot n'est pas- (*Iila and Yacoubou smiles at each other*) [0.5] claire, comme vous dites,[0.4] l'eau du marigot- [0.1] n'est pas propre. [0.3] Bien! [2.2]  
T: 03.33.4 Isn't clear! (*boy sits down, bows forward a moment, still smirking*) Isn't clean. Very good! [0.2] The water of the stream isn't- (*Iila and Yacoubou smiles at each other*) [0.5] clear, as you say,[0.4] the water of the stream- [0.1] isn't clean. [0.3] Well! [2.2]
- b. L'eau d- l'eau propre, on peut trouver l'eau propre où? [1.6] L'eau propre. [2.6] Comme vous dites que l'eau du marigot n'est [1.1] pas propre, c'est un peu sale. [.] On peut trouver l'eau propre un peu- (*Iila and Yacoubou has lifted their hands, teacher responds*) Oui. [0.7]  
T: The water o- clean water, one may find clean water where? [1.6] Clean water. [2.6] As you say that the water of the stream is [1.1] not clean, it is somewhat dirty. [.] One may find clean water a little- (*Iila and Yacoubou has lifted their hands, teacher responds*) Yes. [0.7]
- (46) **Yacoubou:** 03.58.5 (*stands up*) Forage.[0.6]  
T: 03.58.5 (*stands up*) Drill hole. [0.6]
- 447) **Teacher:** 03.59.7 Au forage! Très bien, (*Yacoubou sits down*) [0.3] l'eau du forage (*starts writing on bl.brd*) est un peu claire,[0.4] hein? (*writes on blackboard,*

- emphatic dot, turns to class*) [1.01] C'est un peu claire. [0.9] C'est un peu claire. [0.5] Oui? [0.5] C'est-? [0.3] propre, claire [0.8] Bien! [0.5]
- T: 03.59.7 At the drill hole! Very good, (*Yacoubou sits down*) [0.3] the water of the drill hole (*starts writing on bl.brd*) is somewhat clear,[0.4] hm? (*writes on blackboard, emphatic dot, turns to class*) [1.01] It is somewhat clear. [0.9] It is somewhat clear. [0.5] Yes? [0.5] It is-? [0.3] clean, clear [0.8] Well! [0.5]
- b. L'eau [0.3] claire peut être comment. [2.4] hn? [0.6] L'eau claire peut être comment? [1.8] L'eau claire est comment? Quand v- L'eau propre est comment? [1.4] Hein?
- T: Clear [0.3] water may be in what way. [2.4] hn? [0.6] Clean water may be how in what way? [1.8] Clean water is how? When y- Clean water is how? [1.4] Hm?
- (48) **Iila:** 04.26.4 Nn- elle est incolore. [0.4]  
T: 04.26.4 Nn- It is uncolored. [0.4]
- (49) **Teacher:** 04.28.5 Hein? [0.3]  
T: 04.28.5 Hm? [0.3]
- (50) **Iila:** 04.29.2 In-couleur [0.5]  
T: 04.29.2 Un-colored. [0.5]
- (51) **Teacher:** 04.30.5 Non. [1.0] Ce n'est pas [0.3] couleur.  
T: 04.30.5 No. [1.0] It isn't [0.3] colored.
- (52) **Somebody:** 04.33.9 (*low voice*) Claire. [0.4]  
T: 04.33.9 (*low voice*) Clear. [0.4]
- (53) **Teacher:** 04.34.8 Qui dit mieux? [1.0]  
T: 04.34.8 Who says better? [1.0]
- (54) **Somebody forward:** 04.36.5 (*low voice*) Claire [1.6]  
T: 04.36.5 (*low voice*) Clear. [1.6]
- (55) **Teacher:** 04.38.9 L'eau propre eest- [0.2] comment. [0.3] Est-ce que ça a [0.2] a des couleurs? [0.3] L'eau propre, l'eau claire là, a des couleurs?  
T: 04.38.9 Clean water iis- [0.2] in what way. [0.3] Does that have [0.2] have colours? [0.3] Clean water, that clear water, does it have colours?
- (56) **Students:** 04.45.4 (*two or three*) Non=Non.  
T: 04.45.4 (*two or three*) No=No.
- (57) **Teacher:** 04.46.6 Hein? [0.3]  
T: 04.46.6 Hm? [0.3]
- (58) **Students:** 04.47.2 *several* Non!  
T: 04.47.2 *several* No!
- (59) **Teacher:** 04.47.7 Quand ça n'a pas de couleurs, on dit comment? [2.1] Quand ça n'a pas de couleurs, on dit que c'est comment? [1.1] C'est-[,] oui, Ahmadou? [0.3]

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- T: 04.47.7 When it doesn't have any colours, how do we say that? [2.1] When it doesn't have any colours, we say that is how? [1.1] It is- [.] Yes, Ahmadou? [0.3]
- (60) **Ahmadou:** 04.55.9 Claire. [0.7] C'est-
- T: 04.55.9 Clear. [0.7] It is-
- (61) **Teacher:** 04.57.4 =C'e-
- T: 04.57.4 =It i-
- (62) **Ahmadou:** 04.57.6 (*almost inaudible*) =claire-
- T: 04.57.6 (*almost inaudible*) =clear-
- (63) **Teacher:** 04.58.4 Oui, c'est claire mais- [0.5] quand, [0.2] Oui, on dit encore autre chose que- comment. [0.6] On dit encore d'une autre manière comment? [2.0] Quand ça n'a pas de couleurs, [0.3] on dit que c'est iin- [2.3] (to Iila, sitting with hand lifted) Oui. [1.2]
- T: 04.58.4 Yes, it is clear but- [0.5] when, [0.2] yes, we say other things as well that- how. [0.6] We say it in yet another way how? [2.0] When it doesn't have colours, [0.3] we say that it is uun- [2.3] (*to Iila, sitting with hand lifted*) Yes. [1.2]
- (64) **Iila:** 05.14.0 (*stands up*) Incolore [0.1]
- T: 05.14.0 (*stands up*) Uncolored. [0.1]
- (65) **Teacher:** 05.15.3 Incolore, très bien! [0.9] On dit que-hn [0.7] L'eau- [0.7] propre est incolore, [.] claire, n'est-ce pas, incolore, très bien. [0.5] Incolore, c'est à dire, ça n'a pas des couleurs. [1.2] Est-ce que l'eau propre- [1.1] a le gout. [0.5] Hein? [0.3] C'est sucré? [1.0] C'est- [0.4] sucré, c'est comme le gaari?<sup>2</sup> [1.9] C'est comment? [0.3] On lève le doigt, ne repondez pas comme ça, on lève d'abord le doigt. [0.2] L'eau- propr-e [1.0] n'a pas- le gout, n'est-ce pas?
- T: 05.15.3 Uncoloured, very good! [0.9] We say that- hn [0.7] Clean- [0.7] water is uncoloured, [.] clear, isn't it, uncoloured, very good. [0.5] Uncoloured, that means, it doesn't have any colours. [1.2] Does clean water- [1.1] have any taste. [0.5] Hm? [0.3] Is it sweet? [1.0] It is- [0.4] sweet, it is like the gaari? [1.9] How is it? [0.3] You raise your hand, don't answer like that, you raise your hand first. [0.2] Clean-water- [1.0] doesn't have- taste, alright?
- (66) **Students:** 05.47.3 (*low voices*) Oui. [0.2]
- T: 05.47.3 (*low voices*) Yes. [0.2]
- (67) **Teacher:** 05.48.2 Ça n'a pas le gout, on dit comment que ça- [0.1] C'est comment [0.4] quand ça n'a pas le gout. [1.4] L'eau là. [0.2] L'eau propre là, [0.3] n'a pas le gout. [0.2] Quand vous buvez, ce n'est pas comme du sucre. [0.3] Ce n'est pas comme le gaari, [0.1] de la bouillie que vous buvez. [0.3] C'est- [0.4] simplement comme ça. [1.4] Hein? [0.6]
- T: 05.48.2 It doesn't have taste, we say how that it- [0.1] It is how [0.4] when

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<sup>2</sup>Gaari is a fairly liquid mush made of cornmeal mixed with ground peanuts, usually sweetened with sugar.

- it doesn't have any taste. [1.4] That water. [0.2] That clean water, [0.3] it doesn't have taste. [0.2] When you drink, it isn't like sugary. [0.3] It isn't like the gaari, [0.1] the mush that you drink. [0.3] It is- [0.4] simply like that. [1.4] Hm? [0.6]
- b. 06.08.1 (*to Yaya who comes in, 20 min. late, stops in front of teacher*) Mefies toi! (*Yaya looks away and down when spoken to*) [1.3] Mefies-toi! [1.0] Tu veux à ce que j- j- j-j-[0.5] je- [4.0] (*Yaya continues into class*) Chaque fois c'est comme ça, les- l-on sonne, toi, tu reste d'abord, tu veux me tempter ou c'est comme- nhng, pour faire quoi?
- T: 06.08.1 (*to Yaya who comes in, 20 min. late, stops in front of teacher*) Watch out! (*Yaya looks away and down when spoken to*) [1.3] Watch out! [1.0] Do you want me to- to- to- to- [0.5] I- [4.0] (*Yaya continues into class*) Every time it is like this, they- t- we ring, you, you stay where you are, are you trying to tempt me or ho- nhng, to do what?
- (68) **Somebody forward:** 06.21.3 (*in nizaa, low*) gewu bángwu ngwa(?) (*murmurs in class, continues til next teacher turn, 8,5 sec. later*)
- T: 06.21.3 (*in nizaa, low*) It is bad to go(?) (*murmurs in class, continues til next teacher turn, 8,5 sec. later*)
- (69) **Somebody:** 06.23.3 Oui- gros (*boy sits down back on CP side*) [5.6]
- T: 6.23.3 Yes- big (*boy sits down back on CP side*) [5.6]
- (70) **Teacher:** 06.29.8 Bien! [0.4] On dit que l'eau- [1.6] L'eau [1.1] claire [0.8] ça n'a pas le gout. [0.2] Quand ça n'a pas le gout, on dit que c'est comment? [0.8]
- T: 06.29.8 Well! [0.4] We say that water- [1.6] clear [1.1] water [0.8] doesn't have a taste. [0.2] When it doesn't have taste, how do we say that it is? [0.8]
- (71) **Somebody:** 06.40.3 (*inaudible*) [0.8]
- (72) **Teacher:** 06.41.4 Hmm? [0.5] Ne regardez pas ça, [0.2] repondez d'abord à la question. [0.2] On dit que c'est comment? Sans- [1.5]
- T: 06.41.4 Hmm? [0.5] Don't look at that, [0.2] answer rather the question. [0.2] We say that it is how? Without- [1.5]
- (73) **Students:** 06.49.8 (*several inaudible answers*)
- (74) **Teacher:** 06.52.9 Oui, ce n'est pas sucré, c'est- on dit que c'est comment alors, quand c'- c'- donc ça veut dire que a n'a pas le gout [0.2], on dit que c'est comment, on av- on avait dit ça, non?
- T: 06.52.9 Yes, it isn't sweet, it is- we say then that it is how, when it- it- so that means that it doesn't have a taste [0.2], we say that it is how, we ha- we have said that, no?
- (75) **Somebody:** 07.00.4 Oui.
- T: 07.00.4 Yes.
- (76) **Teacher:** 07.01.3 Vous ne re- ne-ne-née [2.0]

T: 07.01.3 You don't lo- don- don- don't [2.0]

(77) **Somebody in back:** 07.05.4 Ça ne sent pas.

T: 07.05.4 It doesn't smell.

(78) **Teacher:** 07.06.1 Non. Pas ça. [0.1] Ça n'a pas le gout d'abord. [0.9] Tu vois à la bousse(\*) ce n'est pas sucré. [0.4] Tu vois que c'eeest-[1.3] ce n'est pas-[0.6] bon, [0.2] hein? Ce n'est pas agréable. [0.1] On dit que-[0.8] c'est comment alors? [1.4] Tu vois, ça n'a pas de gout-là [0.7] l'eau claire-là n'a pas de gout [0.7] Hein? [0.2] on dit que c'est comment? [4.6] Sans saveur! On avait dit ça, non? [0.9] Donc l'eau clair-e est sans saveur. (*writes on blackboard*) Hein? Sans saveur. [0.5] C'est à dir-e, ça n'a pas de gout, saveur. [1.6] Bien! [1.1]

T: 07.06.1 No. Not that. [0.1] It hasn't any taste first. [0.9] You see in the mous(\*) it isn't sweet. [0.4] You see that it iiis- [1.3] it isn't- [0.6] good, [0.2] hm? It isn't pleasant. [0.1] We say that-[0.8] it is how then? [1.4] You see, it hasn't any taste-[0.7] clear water hasn't any taste [0.7] Hm? [0.2] We say that it is how? [4.6] Without flavour! We said that, no? [0.9] Clear water then is without flavour. (*writes on blackboard*) Hm? Without flavour. [0.5] That means, it doesn't have any taste, flavour. [1.6] Well! [1.1]

b. (*very loud voice*) Est-ce que l'eau[0.384] propre-là, ça sent? [0.7] L'eau propre sent? (*rough voice, to a girl on sec. row in SIL*) Hey!! Taisez-vous! [0.5] (*smacks lips*) Gardez-moi ça, vite! (*she puts something on floor*) [2.7] (*normal voice*) L'eau [0.3] propre [1.2] - l'eau propre sent? (*Oumarou lifts hand*) [1.0] Oui. [0.8]

T: (*very loud voice*) Does that clean [0.384] water there, smell? [0.7] Does clean water smell? (*rough voice, to a girl on sec. row in SIL*) Hey!! Be quiet you! [0.5] (*smacks lips*) Put that away, quick! (*she puts something on floor*) [2.7] (*normal voice*) Clean [0.3] water [1.2] - does clean water smell? (*Oumarou lifts hand*) [1.0] Yes. [0.8]

(79) **Oumarou:** 08.01.3 (*inaudible answer, sits down again*)

(80) **Teacher:** 08.02.5 L'eau propre ne sent pas, on dit comment, quand l'eau propre ne sent pas, on dit que l'eau est comment? [0.9] Hein? [1.9] Quand l'eau propre- ne sent pas, l'eau claire ne sent pas-là,[0.2] on dit que c'est comment. [0.5] Cette eau eeest-[1.0] hein? (*Hamabarka has hand lifted, but not to answer?*) [2.7] Cette eau est comment? [0.7] eeeeh- Hamabarka. [1.6]

T: 08.02.5 Clean water doesn't smell, how do we say, when clean water does not smell, we say that the water is how? [0.9] Hm? [1.9] When clean water- does not smell, clean water does not smell there, [0.2] we say that it is how. [0.5] This water iiis-[1.0] hm? (*Hamabarka has hand lifted, but not to answer?*) [2.7] This water is how? [0.7] eeeeh- Hamabarka. [1.6]

(81) **Hamabarka:** 08.25.5 C'est propre. [0.4]

T: 08.25.5 It is clean. [0.4]

(82) **Teacher:** 08.27.2 Oui, c'est propre, mais on dit que- quand ça ne sent pas-là. [0.4]

- Hein? [0.48] Ça ne sent pas. Tu a- tu ramène ça un peu au niveau de la bouche, comme ça-là, [0.5] au niveau de le- du nez comme ça, (*Hamabarka covers his mouth and nose with hand in imitation of teacher*) [0.2] tu ne sent pas. (*hand away*) [0.3] Hein? [0.3] Ça ne sent pas pourrit, [0.2] ça ne sent ni- ni-ni- ni-, ça ne sent rien! [0.4] On dit que c'eest- [3.1] Hein?
- T: 08.27.2 Yes, it is clean, but we say that- when it does not smell, then. [0.4] Hm? [0.48] It does not smell. You have- you bring a little up to the mouth, like this, [0.5] up to a- the nose like this, (*Hamabarka covers his mouth and nose with hand in imitation of teacher*) [0.2] you don't smell. (*hand away*) [0.3] Hm? [0.3] It does not smell rotten, [0.2] it does not smell no- no-no- no-, it does not smell anything! [0.4] We say that it iiis- [3.1] Hm?
- (83) **Somebody forward:** 08.47.6 (*in Nizaa*) Ahmadou yéé xxx.
- T: 08.47.6 (*Ahmadou wants xxx.*)
- (84) **Teacher:** 08.48.6 (*smacks lips, to somebody forward in SIL*) Tais-toi! (*Yaya and others look at wrongdoer*) [0.7] Au l-[0.4] Hey! [0.2] Yaya!
- T: 08.48.6 (*smacks lips, to somebody forward in SIL*) Be quiet! (*Yaya and others look at wrongdoer*) [0.7] At - [0.4] Hey! [0.2] Yaya!
- (85) **Yaya:** 08.51.9 (*in Nizaa*) Naá? (*looks at teacher again*)[3.8]
- T: 08.51.9 (*in Nizaa*) What? (*looks at teacher again*)[3.8]
- (86) **Teacher:** 08.55.5 On dit que c'eest- [4.1] c'est in-odore. [0.9] Ça veut donc dire que ça ne sent pas, inodore. (*Yaya mutters something to boy next to him*) [0.9] L'eau- (*writes*) [0.4] in-o-dore. L'eau propre est inodore. (*finish with dot*) [1.3] Hein? Inodore, c'est à dire, ça ne sent pas. [1.5] L'eau propre est claire, [0.6] inodore, sans saveur, c'est à dir-e que ça n'a pas de gout. Hein? Ça ces sont alors les qualités d'une eau- propre. [0.2] Hein? [0.7] C'est une eau propre. Encore appelée eau pooo-[0.3]-table! [...] C'est compris, non? [0.3]
- T: 08.55.5 We say that it iiis- [4.1] it is in-odorous. [0.9] That means then that it does not smell, inodorous. (*Yaya mutters something to boy next to him*) [0.9] Water- (*writes*) [0.4] in-o-dorous. Clean water is inodorous. (*finish with dot*) [1.3] Hm? Inodorous, that is, it does not smell. [1.5] Clean water is clear, [0.6] inodorous, without flavour, that means that it has not any taste. Hm? That is then the qualities of a clean- water. [0.2] Hm? [0.7] It is a clean water. Also called driiin-[0.3]-king water! [...] That's understood, no ?[0.3]
- (87) **Students:** 09.32.1 (*low voices*) Oui, monsieur [0.3]
- T: 09.32.1 (*low voices*) Yes, sir [0.3]
- (88) **Teacher:** 09.33.2 Eau potable, ou pro- eau propre, c'est la même chose, ou l'eau claire. [0.5] Hein? C'est la même, chose. C'est compris, non?
- T: 09.33.2 Drinking water, or cle- clean water, it's the same thing, or clear water. [0.5] Hm ? It is the same, thing. That's understood, no?
- (89) **Students:** 09.41.0 (*louder*) Oui, monsieur.

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T: 09.41.0 (*louder*) Yes, sir.

(90) **Teacher:** 09.42.7 (*very loud voice*) Et l'eau propre est comment, alors. [1.4] (*normal voice*) L'eau propre est comment. (*slaps hands together*) Hey! (*several slaps*) L'eau propre est comment. [1.6] Hein? [0.4] Oui. [0.3] C'est qu-, y a des qualités d-d-d-de l'eau propre au tableau déjà, j'ai déjà écrit ça au tableau, non? [0.7] L'eau propre est comment? [2.0] Oui, Iila! [0.3]

T: 09.42.7 (*very loud voice*) And clean water is how, then. [1.4] (*normal voice*) Clean water is how. (*slaps hands together*) Hey! (*several slaps*) Clean water is how. [1.6] Hm? [0.4] Yes. [0.3] It is th-, there are qualities o-o-o-of clean water already on the blackboard, I have already written that on the blackboard, no? [0.7] Clean water is how? [2.0] Yes, Iila! [0.3]

(91) **Iila:** 10.03.1 (*clear voice*) Incolore. [0.4]

T: 10.03.1 (*clear voice*) Uncoloured. [0.4]

(92) **Teacher:** 10.05.4 Incolore, très bien! [0.2] (*throws a piece of chalk to Iila*) Prends! (*clears throat*) [0.5] Comme les autres ne veulent pas répondre. L'eau propre est comment encore? [1.3] (*louder*) L'eau propre- [0.5]] est comment encore.

T: 10.05.4 Uncoloured, very good! [0.2] (*throws a piece of chalk to Iila*) Catch! (*clears throat*) [0.5] As the others do not want to respond. Clean water is how as well? [1.3] (*louder*) Clean water- [0.5]] is how as well.

(93) **Somebody:** 10.13.3 (*in Nizaa, unintelligible*)xx xx cúmnì'- lò kwi xx

(94) **Teacher:** 10.15.5 Ibi! [1.6] Oui, Issa!

T: 10.15.5 Ibi! [1.6] Yes, Issa!

(95) **Somebody:** 10.18.5 (*very low*) Issa- (*Djeera lifts hand*)

(96) **Issa:** 10.19.0 (*stands up*) L'eau propre est incolore. [0.3]

T: 10.19.0 (*stands up*) Clean water is uncoloured. [0.3]

(97) **Teacher:** 10.21.1 Oui, incolore, on a déjà dit ça. (*Issa sits down*) L'eau propre est- l'eau propre est comment encore. [0.7] (*to to Yacoubou*) Oui! [0.6]

T: 10.21.1 Yes, uncoloured, we have already said that. (*Issa sits down*) Clean water is- clean water is how as well. [0.7] (*to Yacoubou*) Yes! [0.6]

(98) **Yacoubou:** 10.27.0 (*almost inaudible*) L'eau propre est- l'eau propre

T: 10.27.0 (*almost inaudible*) Clean water is- clean water

(99) **Teacher:** 10.28.8 Hein? [0.2] (*Yacoubou lifts hand*)

T: 10.28.8 Hm? [0.2] (*Yacoubou lifts hand*)

(100) **Yacoubou:** 10.29.3 Inc'lore. (*stands up*) [1.3] L'eau propre(\*) est incolore. [0.2]

T: 10.29.3 Unc'loured. (*stands up*) [1.3] Crean(\*) water is uncoloured. [0.2]

(101) **Teacher:** 10.34.1 On a déjà dit ça, dites autres choses. (*Yacoubou sits down*) Y a beaucoup, incolore, c-c-c'est-[0.2] y a d-, l'eau propre est a-, -cor-, est encore comment? [2.3] Quand ça ne sent pas, on dit que c'est comment? [1.5] Oui, Ahmadou!

- T: 10.34.1 We have already said that, say other things. (*Yacoubou sits down*) There are many, uncoloured, it- it- it is-[0.2] there ar-, clean water is a-, -wel-, is how as well? [2.3] When it does not smell, we say that it is how? [1.5] Yes, Ahmadou!
- (102) **Ahmadou:** 10.46.6 (*invisible in back*) Unodeure(\*)  
T: 10.46.6 (*invisible in back*) Unodeurus(\*)
- (103) **Teacher:** 10.48.1 =Inodore, pas unodore, [0.8] inoo- [0.4]  
T: 10.48.1 =Inodoros, not unodoros, [0.8] inoo- [0.4]
- (104) **Students:** 10.51.7 (*a few, weakly*) -odore  
T: 10.51.7 (*a few, weakly*) -odoros
- (105) **Teacher:** 10.52.3 Inodore, repetez! [0.5]  
T: 10.52.3 Inodoros, repeat! [0.5]
- (106) **Students:** 10.53.9 (*most, stronger*) In-o-dore! [.]  
T: 10.53.9 (*most, stronger*) In-o-dorous! [.]
- (107) **Teacher:** 10.55.3 Inodore! [0.1]  
T: 10.55.3 Inodoros! [0.1]
- (108) **Students:** 10.56.3 (*everybody, strongly*) (sal-)In-o-dore! [0.1]  
T: 0.56.3 (*everybody, strongly*) (sal-)In-o-dorous! [0.1]
- (109) **Teacher:** 10.58.0 L'eau propre est inodore! [0.4]  
T: 10.58.0 Clean water is inodoros! [0.4]
- (110) **Students:** 11.00.4 (*everybody*) L'eau propre inodore.  
T: 11.00.4 (*everybody*)Clean water inodoros.
- (111) **Teacher:** 11.03.2 (*strongly*) Est! [0.1] Est! [0.4]  
T: 11.03.2 (*strongly*) Is! [0.1] Is! [0.4]
- (112) **Students:** 11.04.5 (*a bit scattered*) Est!  
T: 11.04.5 (*a bit scattered*) Is!
- (113) **Teacher:** 11.05.1 Inodore [0.3]  
T: 11.05.1 Inodoros [0.3]
- (114) **Students:** 11.06.43 (*everybody, medium strong*) Inodore  
T: 11.06.43 (*everybody, medium strong*) Inodoros
- (115) **Teacher:** 11.07.5 L'eau potable est inodore. [0.4]  
T: 11.07.5 Drinking water is inodoros. [0.4]
- (116) **Students:** 11.10.1 (*everybody, medium strong*) L'eau potable est inodore.  
T: 11.10.1 (*everybody, medium strong*) Drinking water is inodoros.
- (117) **Teacher:** 11.13.5 Quand on parle de l'eau propre, c'est l'eau poo-tabl-e. [0.4] Hein? L'eau potable est inooo-dore, [0.2] allez-y. [0.5]  
T: 11.13.5 When we speak of clean water, it is drink-ing water. [0.4] Hm? Drinking water is inooo-dorous, [0.2] go ahead. [0.5]
- (118) **Students:** 11.20.7 (*most, some disturbance in SIL 2nd row*) L'eau pot-ab-le est



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in-odore.

- T: 11.20.7 (*most, some disturbance in SIL 2nd row*) Drink-ing water is in-odorous.
- (119) **Teacher:** 11.24.5 (*goes down aisle*) L'eau potable est inodore. (*puts hand on head of SIL girl closest to aisle, she lifts her arms protectively*) [0.4]
- T: 11.24.5 (*goes down aisle*) Drinking water is inodorous. (*puts hand on head of SIL girl closest to aisle, she lifts her arms protectively*) [0.4]
- (120) **Students:** 11.26.6 (*most, all heads are turned to watch SIL girl*) L'eau (*teacher removes SIL girl's left hand and slaps her on her ear*) potable (*teacher speaks sharply to her, Fulfulde?*) est ino-dore.
- T: 11.26.6 (*most, all heads are turned to watch SIL girl*) Drinking (*teacher removes SIL girl's left hand and slaps her on her ear*) water (*teacher speaks sharply to her, Fulfulde?*) is in-odorous.
- (121) **Teacher:** 11.29.8 (*girl covers face with her arm, teacher moves away, the others are looking at the teacher again*) L'eau potable est inodore=Tais-toi, (*in Fulfulde*) maɓɓu! [0.8]
- T: 11.29.8 (*girl covers face with her arm, teacher moves away, the others are looking at the teacher again*) Drinking water is inodorous=be quiet, (*in Fulfulde*) shut up! [0.8]
- (122) **Students:** 11.32.8 (*a few only*) [L'eau-] (*students stop speaking*)
- T: 11.32.8 (*a few only*) [Drinking-] (*students stop speaking*)
- (123) **Teacher:** 11.32.8 [L'eau-] 11.33.3 (*continues alone*) potable est inodore! [0.1]
- T: 11.32.8 [Drinking-] 11.33.3 (*continues alone*) water is inodorous! [0.1]
- (124) **Students:** 11.34.8 (*most*) L'eau- po-tab-le est in-o-dore [.]
- T: 11.34.8 (*most*) Drink-ing wa-ter is in-o-dorous. [.]
- (125) **Teacher:** 11.38.6 Iin-o-dore. [0.2]
- T: 11.38.6 Iin-o-dorous. [0.2]
- (126) **Students:** 11.40.01 (*most, louder*)Iin-o-dore!
- T: 11.40.01 (*most, louder*)Iin-o-dorous!
- (127) **Teacher:** 11.41.4 L'eau potable est claire. [0.4]
- T: 11.41.4 Drinking water is clear. [0.4]
- (128) **Students:** 11.43.7 (*most*) L'eau potable est claire.
- T: 11.43.7 (*most*) Drinking water is clear.
- (129) **Teacher:** 11.46.4 =L'eau potable est incolore. [0.2]
- T: 11.46.4 =Drinking water is uncoloured. [0.2]
- (130) **Students:** 11.48.7 (*most*) L'eau potable est incolore.
- T: 11.48.7 (*most*) Drinking water is uncoloured.
- (131) **Teacher:** 11.52.0 =L'eau potable est sans saveur. [0.3]
- T: 11.52.0 =Drinking water is without flavour. [0.3]
- (132) **Students:** 11.54.7 (*most*) L'eau potable est sans saveur. [.]

- T: 11.54.7 (*most*) Drinking water is without flavour. [.]
- (133) **Teacher:** 11.58.1 Sans saveur, ça veut donc dire [0.1] pas de gout! [0.4] Hein? [0.1] On ne sent pas le gout [0.2], hein? [1.9] L'eau- [0.5] quand vous buvez le, la-la-la bouillie, [0.2] c'est sucrée, [0.2] mais l'eau potable n'a pas- [0.6] ce n'est pas sucrée comme- (*slapped girl finally takes arm off face, looks sad*) [0.6] la bouillie, [0.4] hein? [0.2] C'est n'est pas comme le shaï. [1.4] C'est compris, non? [0.1]
- T: 11.58.1 Without flavour, that means then [0.1] no taste! [0.4] Hm? [0.1] One does not feel the taste [0.2], hm? [1.9] Water-[0.5] when you drink the, tha-tha-that mush, [0.2] it is sweet, [0.2] but drinking water does not have- [0.6] it is not sweet like- (*slapped girl finally takes arm off face, looks sad*) [0.6] the mush, [0.4] hm? [0.2] It is not like the shaï. [1.4] That's understood, no? [0.1]
- (134) **Students:** 12.18.6 (*a few, not very loud*) Oui, monsieur
- T: 12.18.6 (*a few, not very loud*) Yes, sir
- (135) **Teacher:** 12.19.4 =Le shaï, c'est le café que vous d-d-dites-là. (*Siroma 1st row returns from toilet(?)*) [0.8] L'eau- [0.3] est [0.4] claire. (*Siroma sits down at the aisle end of row instead of middle*) [0.5] Ç a n'a pas de gout. Quand ça n'a pas de gout, on dit sans saa- [0.4] -veur! (*a girl 2nd row stands up and sit down again, looks outside*) [0.8] Quand ça ne sent pas- [0.4] (*harshly, to 2nd row SIL, innermost girls*) Hey! [2.0] (*smacks lips*) [0.2] Assois-toi comme ça! (*girls comply*) [2.4] L'eau potable eest-[0.3] in-co-[0.2]-lore! (*he starts strolling down the aisle*) L'eau potable est inoo-[0.3]-dore! (*Halima 1st row pinches Siroma's shoulder and comments smth pointing forward*) L'eau potable eest-[0.4] claire! [0.1] L'eau potable est sans saaa-[0.4]-veur! (*Siroma looks but says nothing*) (*teacher turns*) [0.5] Hein? (*starts forward*) [0.4] L'eau potable, c'est [0.1], l'eau comment, l'eau sale? [1.0] Hein? [0.1]
- T: 12.19.4 =The shaï, that is the coffee that you t-t-talk about there. (*Siroma 1st row returns from toilet(?)*) [0.8] Waater- [0.3] is [0.4] clear. (*Siroma sits down at the aisle end of 1st row instead of middle*) [0.5] It does not have any taste. When it does not have a taste, we say without flaa- [0.4] -vour! (*a girl 2nd row stands up and sit down again, looks outside*) [0.8] When it does not smell- [0.4] (*harshly, to 2nd row SIL, innermost girls*) Hey! [2.0] (*smacks lips*) [0.2] Sit down like that! (*girls comply*) [2.4] Drinking water iiis- [0.3] un-co-[0.2]-loured! (*he starts strolling down the aisle*) Drinking water is inoo-[0.3]-dorous! (*Halima 1st row pinches Siroma's shoulder and comments smth pointing forward*) Drinking water iiis-[0.4] clear! [0.1] Drinking water is without flaaa-[0.4]-vour! (*Siroma looks but says nothing*) (*teacher turns*) [0.5] Hm? (*starts forward*) [0.4] Drinking water, it iiis [0.1], what water, dirty water? [1.0] Hm? [0.1]
- (136) **Students:** 12.55.3 (*a few, low voices*) Non-
- T: 12.55.3 (*a few, low voices*) No-
- (137) **Teacher:** 12.56.3 L'eau potable c'est l'eau- [0.4] qui est comment. (*teacher slaps*

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- his hands several times*) [1.4] Hein? (*Yacoubou lifts hand*) [0.9] L'eau potable, c'est l'eau qui est comment? [0.7] Issa. (*Yacoubou turns to look at Issa*) [1.0] L'eau potable, c'est l'eau qui est comment. (*no response from Issa*) [0.8] Qui est sale? (*Ibi lifts hand*)[2.6] Ouui, Ibi! [0.3]
- T: 12.56.3 Drinking water is water- [0.4] which is how. (*teacher slaps his hands several times*) [1.4] Hm? (*Yacoubou lifts hand*) [0.9] Drinking water, it is water that is how? [0.7] Issa. (*Yacoubou turns to look at Issa*) [1.0] Drinking water, it is water that is how. (*no response from Issa*) [0.8] Which is dirty? (*Ibi lifts hand*)[2.6] Yees, Ibi! [0.3]
- (138) **Ibi:** 13.11.9 (*stands up*) Non. [0.5] (*sits down*)
- T: 13.11.9 (*stands up*) No. [0.5] (*sits down*)
- (139) **Teacher:** 13.12.8 C'est l'eau qui est comment. [1.4] L'eau potable-là, c'est l'eau qui est comment. [0.8] Oumarou! (*Oumarou gets up, looks left, says nothing*) [4.0] L'eau potable, c'est l'eau qui est comment? (*teacher slaps hands while speaking*) [1.9] C'est l'eau sale? [1.0]
- T: 13.12.8 It is water which is how. [1.4] Drink-ing water there, it is water that is how. [0.8] Oumarou! (*Oumarou gets up, looks left, says nothing*) [4.0] Drinking water, it is water that is how? (*teacher slaps hands while speaking*) [1.9] Is it dirty water? [1.0]
- (140) **Oumarou:** 13.27.9 (*standing*) Non! [0.4]
- T: 13.27.9 (*standing*) No! [0.4]
- (141) **Teacher:** 13.28.7 C'est quelle eau?
- T: 13.28.7 It is what water?
- (142) **Somebody forward:** 13.28.9 (*in Nizaa, unintelligible*)
- (143) **Teacher:** 13.31.1 (*High pitch, loud*) C'est l'eaau- [1.1]
- T: 13.31.1 (*High pitch, loud*) It is water- [1.1]
- (144) **Oumarou:** 13.32.4 Propre(?) (*sits down*)
- T: 13.32.4 Clean(?) (*sits down*)
- (145) **Teacher:** 13.33.1 Applaussez alors pour Oumarou.
- T: 13.33.1 Applaudes then for Oumarou.
- (146) **Students:** 13.34.4 (*clap-clap-clapclapclap-clap*) [2.9]
- (147) **Teacher:** 13.37.3 L'eaau- [0.4]] potable, c'est l'eaau-[.] comment? [0.3] Yadjj. [2.0]
- T: 13.37.3 Drinking- [0.4]] water, it is waaater- [.] how? [0.3] Yadjj. [2.0]
- (148) **Yadjji:** 13.41.4 (*stands up, inaudible*) [0.3]
- (149) **Teacher:** 13.42.9 C'est l'eau propre. L'eau potable, c'est l'eau comment, Djibeïrou? [0.8]
- T: 13.42.9 It is clean water. Drinking water, it is water how, Djibeïrou? [0.8]
- (150) **Djibeïrou:** 13.46.9 (*stands up*) L'eau propre. [0.1]

- T: 13.46.9 (*stands up*) Clean water. [0.1]
- (151) **Teacher:** 13.48.3 C'est l'eau propre. [0.7] L'eau propre est comment. [0.1] L'eau potable est comment. [1.0]
- a. [T: ] 13.48.3 It is clean water. [0.7] Clean water is how. [0.1] Drinking water is how. [1.0]
- (152) **Ibi:** 13.54.2 -est propre. [0.1]
- T: 13.54.2 -is clean. [0.1]
- (153) **Teacher:** 13.55.2 L'eau potable est- [0.3] propre. (*Ibi sits down*) [0.5] aaa- les qualités de l'eau potable, c'est- est comment, ça sent? [0.8] ça ne sent pas, non? [0.7]
- T: 13.55.2 Drinking water is- [0.3] clean. (*Ibi sits down*) [0.5] aaa- the qualities of drinking water, it is- is how, it smells? [0.8] It does not smell, no? [0.7]
- (154) **Somebody forward:** 14.03.7 Oui [0.1]
- T: 14.03.7 Yes [0.1]
- (155) **Teacher:** 14.04.3 Oui, on dit que c'est [1.0] inoo- (*points to Ibi*) [1.4] Oui! [0.6]
- T: 14.04.3 Yes, we say that it is [1.0] inoo- (*points to Ibi*) [1.4] Yes! [0.6]
- (156) **Ibi:** 14.09.6 (*stands up*) C'est inodeur(\*) [0.4]
- T: 14.09.6 (*stands up*) It is inodeurus(\*) [0.4]
- (157) **Teacher:** 14.11.5 Inoo- [0.5] -dore! Inodeur, oui, inodeur, oui, c'est, c'es- (*Ibi sits down*) on dit inodore, c'est compris, non? [0.3]
- T: 14.11.5 Inoo- [0.5] -dorous! Inodeurus, yes, inodeurus, yes, It is, it i- (*Ibi sits down*) we say inodorous, that's understood, no? [0.3]
- (158) **Students:** 14.18.4 (*most of class*) Oui, monsieur.
- T: 14.18.4 (*most of class*) Yes, sir.
- (159) **Teacher:** 14.19.3 =Oui. [0.9] Bon. [0.6] Boon. [0.3] Inco- [1.3] incoo-[0.1] (*Siroma 1st row suddenly brings his bag closer, looks defiantly at the rest of row*) -lore, oui, [0.2] (*teacher strolls down*) inodeur, c'est la même chose, mais on dit inodore, c'est compris, non? (*turns*)
- T: 14.19.3 =Yes. [0.9] Well. [0.6] Weell. [0.3] Unco- [1.3] Uncoo-[0.1] (*Siroma 1st row suddenly brings his bag closer, looks defiantly at the rest of row*) -loured, yes, [0.2] (*teacher strolls down*) inodeurus, it is the same thing, but we say inodorous, that's understood, no? (*turns*)
- (160) **Students:** 14.31.4 (*not very loud*) Oui, monsieur.
- T: 14.31.4 (*not very loud*) Yes, sir.
- (161) **Teacher:** 14.32.8 Bien! (*starts forward*) [0.7] Bon, [0.1] incolore, ça n'a pas deee- (*turns to class*) [1.1] couleur, c'est compris? [0.4]
- T: 14.32.8 Well! (*starts forward*) [0.7] Well, [0.1] uncoloured, it hasn't anyyy- (*turns to class*) [1.1] colour, that's understood? [0.4]
- (162) **Students:** 14.38.7 (*not very loud*) Oui, monsieur. (*Siroma starts fumbling with*

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*smth in his bag)*

- T: 14.38.7 (*not very loud*) Yes, sir. (*Siroma starts fumbling with smth in his bag*)
- (163) **Teacher:** 14.39.6 =Boon! [5.3] Bien! (*strolls down*) [0.6] Eet sans saa- [0.2] -veur! Ça n'a pas de- (*other boy 1st row, rises and takes smth from the sack*) [0.4] gout! [0.3] Bien! [0.9] Vous avez compris, non? [0.2]
- T: 14.39.6 =Weell! [5.3] Well! (*strolls down*) [0.6] Aand without fla- [0.2] -vour! It hasn't anyyy- (*other boy 1st row, rises and takes smth from the sack*) [0.4] taste! [0.3] Well! [0.9] You have understood, no? [0.2]
- (164) **Students:** 14.52.6 (*not very loud*) Oui, monsieur. [0.1] (*teacher turns*)
- T: 14.52.6 (*not very loud*) Yes, sir. [0.1] (*teacher turns*)
- (165) **Teacher:** 14.53.8 (*starts forward*) Bien, débout! [0.6] (*other boy returns to his place*)
- T: 14.53.8 (*starts forward*) Good, stand up! [0.6] (*other boy returns to his place*)
- (166) **Students:** 14.55.1 (*as they get up*) Je me lève! (*Djeera does not get up*)
- T: 14.55.1 (*as they get up*) I am standing up! (*Djeera does not get up*)
- (167) **Teacher:** 14.57.2 =Assis! [0.1]
- T: 14.57.2 =Sit down! [0.1]
- (168) **Students:** 14.58. (*sits down again*) Je m'assieds! (*Ibi stays up*)
- T: 14.58. (*sits down again*) I am sitting down! (*Ibi stays up*)
- (169) **Teacher:** 14.59.7 =Débout! [0.2]
- T: 14.59.7 =Stand up! [0.2]
- (170) **Students:** 15.00.5 (*they stand up*) Je me lève.
- T: 15.00.5 (*they stand up*) I am standing up.
- (171) **Teacher:** 15.02.4 =Assis! [0.3]
- T: 15.02.4 =Sit down! [0.3]
- (172) **Students:** 15.03.3 (*sit down*) Je m'assieds. [0.1] (*Djeera stretches before sitting down well after the others*)
- T: 15.03.3 (*sit down*) I am sitting down. [0.1] (*Djeera stretches before sitting down well after the others*)
- (173) **Teacher:** 15.04.8 Bien! (*writes on bl.brd, strolls down aisle*) [6.5]
- T: 15.04.8 Well! (*writes on bl.brd, strolls down aisle*) [6.5]
- b. C'est- [0.9] quelle leçon que nous venons de voir. C'est- qui peut nous donner la, l-, le, le titre de la leçon-là. [0.2] C'est quelle leçon? (*stops in aisle*) [2.5] C'est la morale? (*Siroma 1st row stretches hand over and says smth to other boy*) C'est quelle leçon? (*turns, starts forward*) [2.3] Hein? [1.4] C'est quelle leçon, eeh, lila? (*turns again*) [1.7] (*Lila lifts hand, teacher says to Lila*) Oui. [0.5]
- T: It iis- [0.9] which subject that we just have had. It is- who can give us the the, t-, th-, the title of that subject. [0.2] It is which subject? (*stops in aisle*) [2.5] Is it Ethics? (*Siroma 1st row stretches hand over and says smth to*

- other boy*) It is which subject? (*turns, starts forward*) [2.3] Hm? [1.4] It is which subject, eeh, Iila? (*turns again*) [1.7] (*Iila lifts hand, teacher says to Iila*) Yes. [0.5]
- (174) **Iila:** 15.32.6 Que (*stands up*) c'est beau mauvais [0.4]  
 T: 15.32.6 That (*stands up*) it is good bad [0.4]
- (175) **Teacher:** 15.34.8 Ngh-ngh. (*Iila sits down*) [0.5] Ce qu'on vient de voir, c'est quelle leçon? [0.7] C'est la Morale? [1.6] C'est quelle leçon? [1.1] Education à l'environnement? (*other boy fiddles with 2 pencils*) [0.6] Quelle est- quelle leçon?  
 T: 15.34.8 Ngh-ngh. (*Iila sits down*) [0.5] What we just have had, it is which subject? [0.7] Is it Ethics? [1.6] It is which subject? [1.1] Environmental education? (*other boy fiddles with 2 pencils*) [0.6] Which is- which subject?
- (176) **Halima:** 15.48.3 (*whispers in Nizaa to boy second left from her*) Ahmadou, daw pe! (*he smiles, next to him boy beats pencils together, finally breaking one*) [1.8]  
 T: 15.48.3 (*whispers in Nizaa to boy second left from her*) Ahmadou, don't touch! (*he smiles, next to him boy beats pencils together, finally breaking one*) [1.8]
- (177) **Teacher:** 15.51.8 Hein? [2.4] C'est quelle leçon que nous venons de voir? [4.1] On avait dit le matin que quoi, Ahmadou!  
 T: 15.51.8 Hm? [2.4] It is which subject that we just have had? [4.1] We said what this morning, Ahmadou!
- (178) **Somebody:** 16.02.0 (*inaudible, nobody stands up*) [2.7]
- (179) **Teacher:** 16.04.7 C'est quelle leçon? [1.2] C'est la leçon- [6.0] C'est la leçon d'éducation à l'environnement, on avait dit le matin, non? [1.0] Hein? [0.2] Education à l'environnement! [1.1] Science et éducation à l'environnement, on avait dit a le matin, non. [3.0] (*clears throat, then wipes smth on bl.brd, writes*) [12.5] (*low voice*) J'ai même fait l'erreur. [0.2] (*strong voice*) C'est- [0.4] Hygiène pratique [0.7] Quel- c'est Hygiène pratique, oui. [2.2] (*lower voice, laughingly*) J'ai même fais aussi d'erreur. (*strong voice*) C'est Hygiène pratique qu'on avait vu le matin, eh-hn. (*wipes smth. on bl.brd*) [2.1] Bien! [24.0] (*end of lesson, students wait for next thin, Siroma 1st row is busy with his bag, others are bored or tired*)
- T: 16.04.7 It is which subject? [1.2] It is the subject- [6.0] It is the subject of environmental education, we said that this morning, no? [1.0] Hm? [0.2] Environmental education! [1.1] Science and environmental education, we said that this morning, no. [3.0] (*clears throat, then wipes smth on bl.brd, writes*) [12.5] (*low voice*) I've even made a mistake [0.2] (*strong voice*) It is- [0.4] practical hygiene [0.7] Which- it is Practical hygiene, yes. [2.2] (*lower voice, laughingly*) I've even made a mistake myself. (*strong voice*) It is Practical Hygiene that we had this morning, eh-hn. (*wipes smth. on bl.brd*) [2.1] Well! [24.0] (*end of lesson, students wait, Siroma 1st row is busy with his bag, others are bored or tired*)

## **Appendix C**

### **Video lists and questionnaire**

Table C.1: Schoolrecordings 1

<b>School videorecordings 2005-2006</b>				
<i>Video tape id.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Schools and classes recorded</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Transcripts</i>
Galim 2/05	15/09 -05	<b>Ecole Publique Groupe II, Galim</b> – SIL class: French language use, Mathematics – Break	33 min. 2 min. 23 min.	1.30 min. French dialogue
	16/09 -05	CE1&2 class: Science, Mathematics <b>Ecole Publique Groupe II, Galim</b> – Exercises, flag ceremony – CP class: Today's date, French language use	5 min. 36 min. 18 min.	9 min.:Today's date, dialogue practice 2 min.
	19/09 -05 22/09 -05	CP-class: School rules with story <b>Ecole Publique Groupe I, Galim</b> – Flag ceremony – Ecole maternelle	3 min. 6 min.	
Galim 4/05	27/09 -05	<b>Ecole Publique Groupe III, Galim</b> – SIL class: French language use, Practical Hygiene – CP class: French language use	35 min. 16 min.	
	29/09 -05	<b>Ecole Publique, Wogondou</b> – Flag ceremony – SIL&CP class, French lesson presentation/French reading, – Break	5 min. 13 min. 1 min. 10 min.	
	02/10 -05	CM1/2 class, Science <b>Ecole Publique, Mipom</b> – Village reception of new teacher	7 min.	
Galim 5/05	03/10 -05	<b>Ecole Publique, Mipom, (first day of school)</b> – SIL class, writing exercises – CP class, French lesson presentation, dialogues	5 min. 13 min.	5 min. Graphismes 13 min. French lesson



Table C.2: Schoolrecordings 2

<i>Video tape id.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Schools and classes recorded</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Transcripts</i>
<b>Galim 6/05</b>	<b>05/10 -05</b>	<b>The International teachers' day</b>	26 min.	5 min. Teachers' Speech
	<b>08/10 -05</b>	– Celebration with public speeches, procession and music <b>Coranic school, Quartier Haoussa</b>	20 min.	
	<b>13/10 -05</b>	– Early morning Qu'uran reading class. <b>Ecole Publique, Lompta</b>	15 min.	
	<b>14/10 -05</b>	– SIL&CP, Geometry <b>Ecole Publique Groupe II, Galim</b>	9 min.	3.15 min. Mathematics
<b>Galim 7/05</b>		– SIL&CP morning session, mathematics	8 min.	
		– CM1&2 class, English	18 min.	4.40 min. Girls
		– CM1&2 class, Practical work: cooking, basketry, drawing	19 min.	presenting their dishes
		– CM1&2 class, Presentation of food, baskets etc <b>Ecole Publique Groupe II, Galim</b>	4 min.	
<b>Galim 8/05</b>	<b>18/10 -05</b>	– Break, girls clap-skip game. CE2 class, National Culture		
		– Introduction Patouma, Kereg-cagri (riddles)	4 min.	
		– Tale : "Dji wu nam" (The two sisters)	6 min.	12.40 min.
		– Patouma questioning class in Nizaa	3 min.	Introduction, tale and
		– French translation	6 min.	
		– Teacher questioning class in French	10 min.	
		CM1&2 class, National Culture	4 min.	
		– Teacher tells a tale in French	12 min.	
		– Questions about the tale	3 min.	
		– Homework about tales	1 min.	8 min.
		– Patouma, intro with Kereg-cagri (riddles)	4 min.	Introduction, tale and
		– Tale of "Njan` wu mbew" (Woman and monkeys)	2 min.	questions in Nizaa
		– Questions in Nizaa (tape ended)		

Table C.3: Schoolrecordings 3

<i>Video tape id.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Schools and classes recorded</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Transcripts</i>
Galim 9/05	21/10-05	<b>Ecole Publique Groupe II, Galim,</b> SIL&CP class, National Culture – Teacher introduces tale theme – Tells tale in French – Questions class on tale – Teacher gets students to tell tales (Fulfulde), riddles (Nizaa) – Patouma explains Nizaa terms of riddles and tales, in Nizaa – Tells “The Cock and the Hare” – Questions class on tale in nizaa – Translates riddles and tale – Questions class in Nizaa, explains meaning – Teacher ends with morale and more talk of riddles etc	3 min. 6 min. 7 min. 15 min. 3 min. 2 min. 4 min. 6 min. 9 min. 6 min.	13 min. Intro, tale and questions in Nizaa
Galim 11/06	30/01 -06	<b>Ecole Publique, Mipom</b> – SIL&CP class, Start of day, songs for 11 <sup>th</sup> Feb.	25 min.	The good student, date, song
Galim 12/06	30/01 -06	<b>Ecole Publique, Mipom</b> SIL&CP class, Reading, maths, French dialogues	32 min.	
Galim 13/06	11/02 -06	<b>Ecole Publique, Mipom</b> – Youth Festival Day: Procession, drill mvments, speeches	58 min.	
Galim 15/06	23/02 -06	<b>Ecole Publique, Mipom</b> – SIL&CP class, Practical hygiene, Mathematics, French	33 min.	
Galim 18/06	27/02 -06	<b>Ecole Publique Annexe, Tignère</b> – CP class with teacher college student and tutor – Tutor advisory session; interview	48 min. 16 min. 41 min.	17 min, Drinking water

### Village videorecordings 2005-2007

<i>Video-tape id.</i>	<i>Record. Date</i>	<i>Places and situations recorded</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Transcripts</i>
<b>Galim 1/05</b>	<b>09/09 -05</b>	<b>Galim</b> – Nizaa literacy teacher course	20 min	
<b>Galim 5/05</b>	<b>04/10 -05</b>	<b>Mipom</b> – Girl pounding maize	3 min.	
<b>Galim 10/05</b>	<b>20/10 -05</b>	<b>Interview Adabouri Gonkira, Galim</b> – Mount Jim ceremonies – Rites and songs – Dialectes and vocabulary (continues on audiocassette AudioGalim3/05)	60 min.	
<b>Galim 11/06</b>	<b>21/10 -06</b>	<b>Galim (EELC pastor's compound)</b> – Grandmother and grandchildren met	6 min	
		<b>Mipom</b>		
	<b>23/01 -06</b>	– My household (Compound 6)	10 min.	
	<b>25/01 -06</b>	– Girls playing, dollhouse (Compound 6)	1 min.	
	<b>26/01 -06</b>	– Visiting a 7-day old baby (Compound 3)	4 min.	
	<b>27/01 -06</b>	– Making string (Compound 6)	3 min.	
		– Grandmother visits my household (Compound 6)	1 min.	4,30 min. Women speaking ; baby talk
		– Mother and baby interacting (Compound 6)	3 min.	
<b>Galim 13/06</b>		<b>Mipom</b>		
	<b>02/02 -06</b>	– Toddler quarrel, mother's intervention (Compound 6)	6 min.	6 min. 'Sharing'
	<b>03/02 -6</b>	– Talk (Compound 6)	2 min.	
	<b>06/02 -06</b>	– Literacy class of 2 students (Compound 6)	2 min.	
		– Children pounding maize (Compound 6)	1 min.	
	<b>07/02 -06</b>	– Visit at the river; people working, washing, talking	14 min.	
		– A mother and some children visit (Compound 6)	2 min.	

Table C.4: Village recordings 1

Table C.5: Village recordings 2

<i>Video-tape id.</i>	<i>Record. Date</i>	<i>Places and situations recorded</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Transcripts</i>
<b>Galim</b>		<b>Mipom</b>		
<b>14/06</b>	<b>11/02-06</b>	– Village leaders' discussion after festival procession	17 min.	1.45 min. 'Asking for fire'
	<b>12/02 -06</b>	– Playing games session 1, (Compound 6)	20 min.	
	<b>17/02 -06</b>	– Pounding maize for wedding feast (Compound 14)	13 min.	
		– A bride and her train enter the village	15 min.	
<b>Galim</b>		<b>Mipom</b>		
<b>15/06</b>		– Playing games session 2, Start (Compound 8)	8 min.	
<b>Galim</b>		<b>Mipom</b>		
<b>26/06</b>	<b>18/02 -06</b>	– Tobi demonstrating basketry	6 min.	1.45 min.
		– Wedding feast couscous-cooking (Compound 14)	2 min.	Demonstrating skill
	<b>19/12 -06</b>	– Entertaining a guest (Compound 6)	1 min.	
		– Wedding ceremonies (Compound 14 and 13)	33 min.	
		– Village views	3 min.	
	<b>23/02 -06</b>	– Buying antilope meat	2 min.	
<b>Galim</b>		<b>Mipom</b>		
<b>17/06</b>		– Playing games session 2, continued (Compound 8)	27 min	
<b>Tignère</b>		<b>Tignère</b>		
<b>-07</b>		– Nizaa storytelling session in a women's association	11 min.	9.50 min. 3 tales

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Figure C.1: Teacher questionnaire  
*Genres de discours scolaires et domestiques* *Projet PhD de B. Kjelsvik*

**Questionnaire générale**

Interviewer:.....  
Date:.....

Nom:.....

Poste actuelle de travail .....

Etablissement:.....

Né(e).....à .....

Sex:.....

Niveau de formation:.....

Langues/patois que vous connaissez parler:

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1. Combien d'années avez-vous travaillé ici? Où ailleurs ?

2. La localité ici est caractérisée par quoi au niveau de l'école, par rapport à vos expériences ailleurs?

3. Quelles difficultés sont les plus important ici ?

4. Est-ce qu'il y a des traits locaux qui vous facilitent le travail?

5. Divers



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